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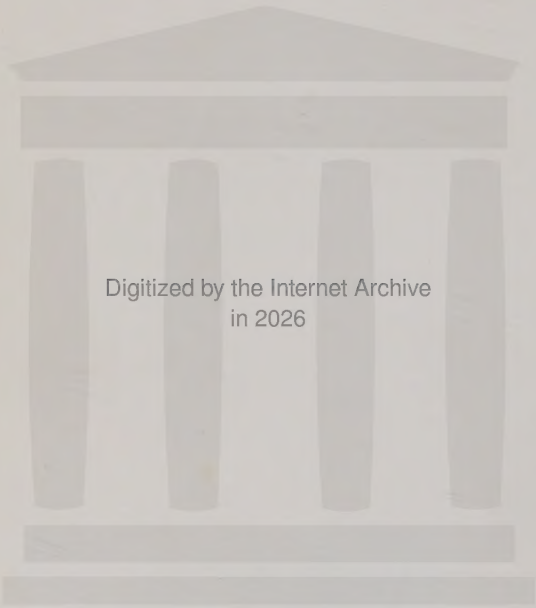

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AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS OF TODAY

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Photograph by Florence Vandaman

REHEARSAL SCENE, "MARCO MILLIONS" AT THE GUILD THEATRE

Eugene O'Neill is the gentleman whose profile shows indistinctly in the center of the picture

AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS OF TODAY

BY BURNS MANTLE

NEW YORK
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1929

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INTRODUCTION

The object of this volume is to record, both for purposes of handy reference and informative reading, the names, records and romantic backgrounds of those American playwrights who have had a part in the development of the American theatre as we know it today and as some of us knew it yesterday.

In order to confine the book to a size materially smaller than that of a city telephone directory and also to place a fair premium upon its timeliness of subject, I have embraced the editorial prerogative of placing a limit upon the number of dramatists whose achievements should be admitted to these pages.

I decided arbitrarily to go no farther back than the season of 1919–20 and, with rare exceptions, to include herein the records only of those playwrights who have had two or more plays produced since that time.

In this decision I was influenced by two conclusions: First, that the playwright situation changes so frequently seven years is practically a lifetime in the history of the average dramatist,

Second, that the real interest of playgoers in their playwrights carries them little, if any, beyond the work of those dramatists with whose most recent plays they are familiar.

Many playwrights, it is true, have continued successfully as important contributors to the literature of the

stage over periods of ten, twenty, thirty and forty years. But for each of these there are a hundred and one who have flashed brilliantly with one play or two, or for one season or four, and then disappeared completely from the scene. Sometimes they have become disgustingly rich and lazy, and again just lazy and disgusted.

I was also influenced to some extent by the fact that the most definite record of the theatre in America, insofar as the New York theatre represents the theatre in America, which is far enough, is contained in a series of volumes bearing the alluring and slightly boastful titles of "The Best Plays"—of each successive season, beginning with the season of 1919–20.

Stand this volume of "American Playwrights of To-day" at the end of those nine volumes of "Best Plays" and you have not only a fairly complete history of the American theatre for that particular period but also a nucleus to which may be added future volumes for which your descendants will unquestionably bless you. And if the reader thinks this is written with any idea of calling his attention to the possibility of completing such a collection of theatre histories he is perfectly correct in that surmise. It is.

The facts herein contained have been collected with the aid of a voluminous questionnaire, a vast amount of turning back to old records, frequent dependence upon such good friends of young drama editors as the authoritative Barrett H. Clark and practically no personal calls.

No attempt has been made at first-hand analysis and observation of character. Most biographers, I

realize, feel that they know their subjects much better after having eaten lunch with them or watched them as they moved restlessly about in front of fireplace or radiator.

But I, for one, was never very easy at the "And now, Mr. Smith, you say your grandmother was a Gumph" business. I am too good a reporter to take notes and not good enough to trust implicitly my memory of spoken words. Also as an interviewer I suffer from the suspicion that the affairs of the Gumphs are no affairs of mine, unless they care to tell me of them. Hence the dependence upon the questionnaire.

I have been considerably advantaged, however, by a playgoing experience that began thirty years ago and has continued with amazing persistency ever since. I don't know that this experience was absolutely necessary to the compilation of a playwrights record concerned mainly with the last eight or nine years, but it frequently came in very handy.

I have a feeling that some worthy playwrights entitled to a place in this volume have been overlooked. If so I regret the oversight. John Byram, of the New York Times, and I combed the records; we had the help of the Dramatists' Guild in sending out the questionnaire and I have been as careful as a fussy housewife in the sorting and arrangement. I trust those playwrights who have been unwittingly omitted will consider my apology spoken and send in the proper records for future editions.

Likewise, I have not tried to group the playwrights in the order of their assumed merit. I have taken them in the order of their interest judged by the nature and

timeliness of their most recent activities in the theatre. It will not be necessary, unless they feel the slight keenly, for any of them to write and suggest a different and, to them, fairer arrangement, because by that time neither of us will be able to do anything about it so far as this particular book is concerned.

I am beholden to many people for their friendly co-operation in helping me prepare "American Playwrights of To-day." First to the playwrights themselves for their answers to my queries and the fine spirit in which these were returned. To Barrett Clark, before mentioned, for the use of his own facts and figures and those concerned with the lives and work of Eugene O'Neill and Paul Green particularly; to Mr. Byram, also before mentioned, for his help in classifying the list of eligibles, and to the publishers for having waited patiently a year after the date of promise for a manuscript which is hereby humbly and hopefully submitted.

B. M.

Forest Hills, L. I.
1929

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AMERICAN PLAYWRIGHTS OF TODAY

THE HONOR GROUP—

Being more or less extended references to the lives and work of the eight dramatists who have in the last eleven years won the Pulitzer prize of $1,000 for having written "the original American play performed in New York which best represents the educational value and power of the stage in raising the standard of good morals, good taste and good manners" in its particular season.

EUGENE O'NEILL

THERE are literally dozens of Eugene O'Neills sprung from the life of this leader of American dramatists. I find myself, in reducing them to such a number as may be most satisfactorily included in this brief biography, particularly interested in two of them—

The son born to Ella Quinlan O'Neill and James O'Neill, actor, October 16, 1888, at the Barrett House, New York, who was duly christened Eugene Gladstone O'Neill, and who lived twenty-seven tempestuous years before they told him his lungs were touched and he would have to go into a sanitorium.

And the Eugene O'Neill who a year later came out of that sanitorium a physically healed and spiritually changed man.

The boyish O'Neill fascinates me by the very frankness and consistency of his rebelliousness, his defiance of everything from paternal authority to the decrees of fate.

The maturing O'Neill looms impressively as a literary individualist as definitely set on self-expression as the rebellious boy was set on living his own life in his own sweetly exasperating way.

As a man of the theatre I like to think that the Barrett House, where the infant O'Neill first saw the light of day and probably squawked a bit in protest at its brightness, stood at the corner of 43rd St. and Broadway across the street from the present location of Joseph Leblang's cutrate ticket brokerage. Since it was

called the Barrett House the hotel has carried many other names, notably that of the Cadillac, and for many, many years it was famous the length of the Rialto for the free lunches it served with the drinks at its bar and for the small army of improvident actors those free lunches kept alive. Some still hold this against the old Cadillac, but they are, I think, a little ungenerous.

I mention Mr. Leblang's ticket service enterprise as an excuse to report that a part of the first real money Mr. O'Neill made from his plays came from the successful run of "Desire Under the Elms," which was brought from The Greenwich Village Theatre by a firm financed by Mr. Leblang and moved uptown to enjoy an extended run in the very center of the commercial theatre belt.

It amuses me now to think of Mr. Leblang standing in the window of his offices in the Fitzgerald building, which he has bought with the profits of his ticket brokerage, pointing across the street to the birthplace of America's foremost dramatist and, pressed for a statement, being impelled modestly to admit that he, too, has played a helpful part in bringing the O'Neill career to its present fruition.

This one, this original Eugene O'Neill, is known intimately to as few relatives and friends as any man can reasonably get along with, and the circle is probably being cut constantly.

But the many O'Neills about whom books have been written and analyses of character printed are known in all those parts of the habitable world where theatres exist. In this group there is a new personality

born in the public mind with the production of each new O'Neill drama.

If the facts must be repeated, as it seems they must, the real O'Neill is a fairly tall young man, dark, wiry, nervous, of interesting rather than handsome countenance, serious, and shy to the point of being easily embarrassed. He talks little, his friends tell me, and practically not at all unless the subject happens to be one in which he is really interested. He hates the idea of publicity and the searching impertinences of interviewers with the same enthusiasm as the devil hates baptismal fonts.

This is the O'Neill who, during the years of his growth as a creative artist in the theatre, wrote drama that interested him with little thought as to its availability for production in the standardized theatres and no thought at all, I am given to believe, as to the probable profits it might return. In his struggling days his plays were often too long, too cumbersome, too elaborately peopled or too freakish for any commercial manager to have considered producing them, even when he understood them.

This is the O'Neill who said, in a Philadelphia Public Ledger interview six years ago: "I intend to use whatever I can make my own, to write about anything under the sun in any manner that fits the subject. And I shall never be influenced by any consideration but one: Is it the truth as I know it—or, better still, feel it? If so, shoot, and let the splinters fly wherever they may. If not, not. This sounds brave and bold—but it isn't. It simply means that I want to do what gives me pleasure and worth in my own eyes, and

don't care to do what doesn't. . . . It is just life that interests me as a thing in itself. The why and wherefore I haven't attempted to touch on yet."

This also is the O'Neill who was quoted as saying two years later: "I don't go to the theatre because I can always do a better production in my mind. Nor do I ever go to see one of my own plays—have seen only three of them since they started coming out."

To explain this disinterest he went on to say that, having been brought up in the theatre of his father, he knew it so thoroughly as to both its artificialities and its technique that acting and actors simply got between him and the play. No one who knows him will think of this as a pose, because there is probably less of the poseur about this young man than about any other the theatre knows.

Occasionally, of late years, you do happen upon an O'Neill who has come to take more of what we might call a sporting interest in the production of his plays. He was, for example, quite anxiously concerned about the possible fate of "Marco Millions." He wrote from Bermuda (to George Jean Nathan, as you may read in "The Theatre of George Jean Nathan" by Isaac Goldberg) pleading a little anxiously that that editor do what he could to further a proper reading of the play, after it had been once bought and later released by David Belasco, and still later read and rejected (principally because of the physical difficulties and huge cost of its production) by numerous other producers.

"I anticipated the Miller verdict," says O'Neill, in this letter, "but not the rejection of Hopkins, the news

of which reached me in a note from Madden (of the American Play Company) by the same mail as your last. My hope was that Arthur Hopkins might take it on, especially as Bobby (Robert Edmond) Jones is so keen to do the sets. Selwyn is O. K., but my inner hunch is that he wouldn't look at it with a considering eye. How about Dillingham or Ames? I might try Gest."

And again, later: "What you can do, which would be a great favor, is to pursuade Ames to give it a real reading. He has had the script for some time without any report, so I conclude he hasn't read it."

And finally this suggestion of at least a momentary interest in the sordid ways and schemes of the money makers: "The so-and-so group are still in the throes of trying to raise the money to do 'Lazarus Laughed'. . . . It will cost around $60,000. I am getting a bit sick of these groups that never have the dough to do right by me. At the old Provincetown Playhouse naturally one expected it. I am afraid I shall soon have to go on a search for an insane and therefore truly generous millionaire and start my own theatre."

It is not, however, an O'Neill growing mercenary who would thus snare a millionaire and put his money into a perfect theatre. It is, as usual, the O'Neill who wants to do beautifully extravagant and, to him important things in the theatre. He is a many-sided individual and really very little known. But he has been consistently true to this phase of his character throughout his career.

I think the O'Neill who first fascinated me was the author of "Beyond the Horizon." As a reviewer of

plays I had come through the experiences of his approach toward this production with him: had seen most of his one-act plays, found them vital and dramatically sound and was eager to see this first full-length effort. For me a new playwright was born the afternoon of that special matinee.

Before that he had been James O'Neill's rather wild young son possessed of a feeling for drama and a promising sense of the theatre, but no more. I had pictured him as a rebellious boy being dragged from town to town as an exacting responsibility attached to the entourage of his discouraged father's "Count of Monte Cristo" company: probably loved as other children are loved but despaired of periodically as a mischievous and thoroughly exasperating nuisance: a bit of human excess baggage as hard to keep track of as the hotel trunks and a lot less useful.

As soon as he was old enough to be left anywhere, which was when he was seven, he was sent to a Catholic boarding school. Then to the De La Salle institute. When he was fourteen he was entered in the Betts Academy at Stamford. Four years later he became a freshman at Princeton in the fall and was suspended for a year the following spring.

His misdemeanor at Princeton is generally passed over as a boyish prank. And so it was. A generous impulse born of the heavenly nights, according to one of his friends, inspired Eugene with an urge to present the president of the college (it was during Woodrow Wilson's regime, I believe) with a cooling bottle of beer. Being in doubt as to how the gift would be received, and, naturally, not wishing to embarrass Prexy,

he tossed the bottle nonchalantly in at the latter's study window and immediately went away from there.

The college authorities felt obliged to discourage this practice of gift-bearing for fear similarly generous impulses might become common with the undergraduates. And so young O'Neill was invited to spend a year at home.

At the end of the year Eugene did not go back to Princeton. He went rather in search of a job. And thus began the second or adventurous phase of his exciting life.

He was for a time a secretary in a mail order house —a restless, unhappy, cabined and confined secretary. He even tried marriage as a sort of job and found that equally incompatible. In 1909 he married Kathleen Jenkins of New York, discovered the union to be a mistake for both of them a few months later and left her to go travelling. She bore him a son, who was named Eugene. They were formally divorced three years later.

Now that the horizons began to beckon to him, as they beckon in "Beyond the Horizon" to the poet farmer boy, he sailed for Central America with a mining engineer. There they prospected for gold, but all they got, at least all Eugene got, was malarial fever. Six months later he was shipped home.

The family got him on his feet again and he became the assistant manager of a touring theatrical company. Soon he found that he was no more interested in the theatre now than he had been as a boy when the only thing he really liked about it was helping to make the waves in "Monte Cristo" for papa to leap into. He

went to sea again, working his way to Buenos Aires on a Norwegian barque. It took him sixty-five days to get there and then he left his ship bobbing lazily in the harbor and went job-hunting in the city. He found several jobs. He was for a time in the draughting room of the Westinghouse Electrical Company. He worked in the wool house of a packing plant in La Plata. He did office work for the Singer Sewing Machine Company in Buenos Aires. But he was at this time a pretty good two-fisted anti-prohibitionist and responsibilities sat lightly with him. One job gone he got another. Or tried to. When he could not get one on land he took to the sea again.

This time he shipped as a mule tender on a cattle boat that was making a round trip from Buenos Aires to Durban, South Africa. It was his intention to stay in South Africa and, it may be, to grow up with the country. But when he got there it appears he did not have money enough to satisfy the authorities so he shipped back again for the return voyage. By the time he was again in the Argentine he knew a lot about mules. He did not like them at all.

In a few days his mule-tender savings were gone and he went back to job-hunting. This time, however, ill luck dogged his footsteps and he finally was reduced to "beach combing," which may be picturesquely romantic in certain tales of the South Seas but which, in fact, is a pretty terrible experience. A month of it and young 'Gene was miserably homesick. He shipped the first chance he had on the first boat that held out the promise of bringing him eventually back to New York.

Another period of family rehabilitation followed. After the rehabilitation other exasperations and other misunderstandings. Then Eugene ran away to sea again, shipping this time as an able seaman on the American line to Southampton and back. After which he decided again that perhaps he had better settle down. He went back to acting a small part in his father's company. "The Count of Monte Cristo" had by now been reduced to a one-act version for use in vaudeville. That tour over with he went to work the next year as a reporter on the New London, Conn. Telegraph.

He was, Barrett H. Clark, the most searching of his Boswells reports, a very fair sort of newspaper man, indulging in verse occasionally and contributing to a daily column.

It was while he was working as a reporter that his health broke. There were, the doctors told him, spots on his lungs. He must go to a sanitorium. He went to the Gaylord farm at Wallingford, Conn. It was there he first began to think seriously of creative writing. The treatments did much to make him over physically, and with a new body came a new mind.

When he was discharged from the sanitorium he went back to the family summer home in New London and when the theatre season took the family on the road again he stayed behind with an English family, the Rippins, and fortunately continued the outdoor life and the exercise that had done so much for him at the sanitorium. Within the next year he had written no less than eleven one-act plays.

The new O'Neill had also taken on a healthy in-

terest in himself. He felt now that he could write and knew that he wanted to write. The old theatre, the theatre he had known as his father's theatre, had little interest for him but the new theatre in which he had come to believe himself a potential factor interested him greatly. He made arrangements to take the playwriting course known as English 47 at Harvard. For a year he studied under Professor George Pierce Baker.

John V. A. Weaver, the poet who has distinguished himself in two ways, first by writing excellent verse and second by marrying the popular Peggy Wood, has written interestingly of these days at Harvard when he was a fellow student with O'Neill. They were, Mr. Weaver suggests with amused reminiscence, boys together. Their acquaintance started the day O'Neill, who had been keeping completely within his shell, stuck forth his head long enough to reply to the professor when the latter asked what it would be best to do with a short play submitted that morning by another student.

"Cut it to twenty minutes," suggested O'Neill, "give it a couple of tunes and it is a sure-fire burleycue."

Thus were the gayer spirits of the class led to believe that not of his own choice did the son of James O'Neill absent himself entirely from their company. There were parties after this. The boys came to know their ale houses pretty well, according to Weaver, but did not neglect their art.

During the Harvard year O'Neill wrote a long play of sea-faring life first called "The Second Engineer,"

later changed to "The Personal Equation," and finally torn apart and its best scenes embodied in the shorter sea plays. It was a bad play, according to its author, and in this conclusion his fellow students are agreed. He also adapted a one-act play from a Black Cat short story which he called "The Dear Doctor." When he tried to sell it for use in vaudeville, he discovered, however, that the story from which he took the plot had itself been taken from a vaudeville sketch.

Out of Harvard O'Neill, in whom the free-life, Greenwich Village urge was still strong, went to live there. He was what his intimates describe as a bit of a radical in those days. It was war times overseas, we were trying to be sympathetically neutral and hating it. There was much discussion. Would-be correctors of the scheme of things as it was were numerous and a little trying. Our blossoming playwright was a great chum of the radical Labor group that winter. The next summer he went to Provincetown and there, as the salt sprays cleared his mind, he achieved his second step up with the help of the Provincetown Players.

He had, as previously noted, a trunk full of short plays he had written in the sanitorium and out of it. Naturally he was interested in the Wharf theatre which George Cram Cook, Susan Glaspell, Mary Heaton Vorse, Frank Shay, Hutchins Hapgood, Harry Kemp and others of that creative artists' colony had organized. He got in touch with them and read them "Bound East for Cardiff." They were agreeably impressed and produced the play shortly afterward. That was the beginning.

Naturally there has been some dispute as to just

how much O'Neill owes to the Provincetown group and how much they owe to him. It probably is fair to say that they could never have progressed as far as they did without him, and that he would never have made his entry into New York and the commercial theatre as successfully or as quickly as he did if he had not had their help. Thus honors are easy.

From Provincetown and the Wharf theatre this enthused group moved back to town for the winter and organized the Provincetown players. They were pledged, at O'Neill's suggestion I have heard, to run an independent experimental theatre that should be devoted exclusively to new American drama. As each of them had a drama in his mind and probably several in his trunk, if he had a trunk, I suspect it was not difficult to get them to agree to this, but only the plays of O'Neill and Miss Glaspell ever came to much in production.

During this adventure O'Neill worked like an army of Trojans and was a dominant spirit in all the Provincetowners did in their Macdougall Street barn. He was also reaching out now, timidly testing the uptown, Broadway impression of his written plays. George Jean Nathan was one of his first supporters. In the Smart Set, then edited by Nathan and Henry Mencken, three of the short O'Neill plays were printed—"The Long Voyage Home," "The Moon of the Caribbees" and "Ile."

By way of supporting the adventure of these experimental producers the New York play reviewers covered most of the new productions at the Provincetown and thus they also had a hand in spreading the

growing fame of O'Neill. But the world had a lot to think of during 1917 and 1918. There was, to repeat, a war on. What was happening in the theatre was interesting but hardly as important as it might otherwise have been.

It was not until February, 1920, that the complete emergence of O'Neill was achieved. John D. Williams, at the time a close friend of Nathan's, had read the playwright's first long play, "Beyond the Horizon," and was keen to produce it. Williams gave the script to Richard Bennett to read and the actor also became enthused. Finally a special matinee performance was arranged with Bennett as the dreaming farm boy, and the other actors borrowed from current productions. Helen Mackellar was the leading woman. Robert Kelly played the second male rôle.

That was a memorable afternoon. I recall that those of us whose playgoing was professional looked a little awed and solemn. I recall, also, that in the midst of my own enthusiasm I ventured the opinion that "Beyond the Horizon" was a shade too fine for popular consumption, and a little more than a shade too depressing. The play, when staged later as a regular attraction, ran out the season in the Little Theatre, with a bit of forcing, but the farther west it travelled the less popular it became.

It won, however, the Pulitzer prize for that year and it established O'Neill firmly as a playwright of promise. He continued to work hard thereafter with the Provincetown group for several months, but gradually his greater interests uptown took his time and occupied his mind. Ask them, and most of his old

associates will tell you that 'Gene, even though he may have been unconscious of it, gradually assumed the high hat of the successful and independent dramatist. Adulation, they say, did for him what it will do for any man born of woman. But I am disinclined, without intimate knowledge of the circumstances, to believe this. Much can be imagined that is only partly true, and the minds of the envious furnish fertile soil for such imaginings. "Personally," said Barrett Clark, when I asked him about it, "I think O'Neill merely concentrated on his art and the old associates were unconsciously squeezed out."

I know we who were accepting O'Neill as of growing importance in the theatre news of the day continued to hear of him as a recluse and a slightly eccentric young person still absolutely devoted to the experimental theatre. Hadn't he given his first production of "The Hairy Ape," which Hopkins had wanted to do in grand style uptown, to the Provincetowners? They also had the first chance at "The Emperor Jones."

But, gradually, as such things happen, there were disagreements about this and that, the wider fields of Broadway beckoned and a break of sorts became inevitable.

It was in 1918, that O'Neill married again. The second Mrs. O'Neill was Agnes Boulton. For ten years it was reported as a most happy marriage. Under the new home influences O'Neill settled into the work entailed by his growing reputation with a purposeful regularity that was seldom disturbed. An all-year home was maintained near Ridgefield, Conn.

There was a summer home at Provincetown and, lastly, a place in Bermuda where most of the recent plays have been written. There were also two O'Neill children, by the second marriage, a boy now eight and a girl three, to whom the father has been devoted.

But again a time came when home conditions proved wing-binding and just before I began the compilation of this sketch the papers were full of a second O'Neill divorce. It was, from Mrs. O'Neill's statement, an agreed upon separation by the terms of which the wife and the children were provided for generously and the playwright was placed in the way of gaining that "illusion of freedom" for which Mrs. O'Neill admits the creative artist is and by his nature must be forever searching.

Before moving into a catalogue of the O'Neill playwriting activities in chronological sequence I may mention this as distinctly the dramatist's best year professionally. When David Belasco, Arthur Hopkins and other of the commercial managers admitted their inability to produce the newer O'Neill dramas, give them a proper setting and still recover even the amount of their investment, the playwright turned to the Theatre Guild. As a semi-endowed organization with such guaranteed income as a list of 30,000 subscribers assures it, and as a play producing group with ambitions as intelligent and ideals as high as any our theatre has known, this combination of dramatist and producer seemed most reasonable and happy. As a result of the O'Neill conferences the Guild agreed to do two of the playwright's heaviest and costliest plays within the same season.

Thus "Marco Millions," the only approach to comedy that O'Neill has written in his ten years devoted to the theatre, was just established as a success at one Guild theatre when "Strange Interlude" was ushered in at another. Within a week the latter play had created a tremendous stir as not only the supreme novelty of the play season, but also as the most significant drama so far written by an American.

So far as I can learn from those who have worked with him, the O'Neill habits have not changed greatly. He attended comparatively few of the Guild rehearsals of his plays and made but few suggestions when he did attend. He never is given to leaping from the darkened auditorium to correct a player in the reading of a line or the assumption of a pose. If he has a suggestion to make he takes it up with the director and usually gets his way because he is usually right. He is not one to write lines he neither means nor considers unimportant to the action of the play. Any director has to be a good director, as well as a good talker, to change this O'Neill belief in himself.

When Arthur Hopkins staged "Anna Christie," which was the first popular success O'Neill enjoyed, the playwright paid little attention to rehearsals. There was his script, there were his instructions. For the rest, he was willing to trust the producer.

He is more likely to be friends with the stage hands than he is with the actors or the boys out front. One of his best pals in the Village is a former iron-worker who took to shoving scenery and finally became a manager of sorts. Looking for O'Neill during a Village theatre rehearsal you would be much more likely to

find him in some lunch counter swapping yarns with this chap than in the back of the auditorium, where he was supposed to be.

He has, however, changed noticeably in his attitude toward his work. It has become more serious with him and he is methodical about it. He is no believer in the theory that creative artists do their best work under the spur of artificial stimulation. Play and work cannot be combined. When he works he works hard, and he has taken time for precious little play the last several years.

For those who must know how the great go about their daily labors, it is reliably reported of Mr. O'Neill that ideas for plays are born of many varying experiences with him. All his dramas are based to a certain extent upon actual happenings, and real life characters, or upon happenings and characters in close relation to these.

Arthur Hopkins told me the year he produced "The Hairy Ape," and after a peek into an O'Neill note book, that he was convinced if the playwright wrote steadily for the ten years next following he would not be able to fill in all the plots or make use of half the ideas for plays and the development of plays of which he had made note.

These ideas either become insistent in their demand for expression or they lie quietly germinating in the deeper recesses of the O'Neill mind. When their creator's interest is aroused and his human passion for avoiding the thralldom of labor is overcome he writes his plays out in longhand, copies them, corrects them and types a first draft of them himself. He used to

like to put them aside for a spell. Now, I suspect, he is eager for some sort of expression of opinion as to whether he has achieved hoped for results or not about as soon as the play is finished.

Excluding the production of his short plays by the Provincetown players, beginning with that of "Bound East for Cardiff" in the summer of 1916, and confining the record only to those plays produced during the eight years this volume covers—from the season of 1919–20 to the present—the O'Neill record stands as follows:

"The Dreamy Kid." Provincetown Players. Produced by The Playwrights' Theatre, New York, Oct. 31, 1919.

"Beyond the Horizon." Produced by John D. Williams, Morosco Theatre, New York, Feb. 2, 1920.

"Chris Christopherson." Produced by George C. Tyler. Atlantic City, March 8, 1920.

"Exorcism." Produced by Provincetown Players. The Playwrights' Theatre, New York, March 26, 1920.

"The Emperor Jones." Produced by Provincetown Players. The Playwrights' Theatre, New York, Nov. 3, 1920.

"Diff'rent." Produced by Provincetown Players. The Playwrights' Theatre, New York, Dec. 27, 1920.

"Gold." Produced by John D. Williams. Frazee Theatre, New York, June 1, 1921.

"Anna Christie." Produced by Arthur Hopkins. Vanderbilt Theatre, New York, Nov. 2, 1921.

"The Straw." Produced by George C. Tyler. Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, Nov. 10, 1921.

"The First Man." Produced by Neighborhood Playhouse, New York, March 4, 1922.

"The Hairy Ape." Produced by Provincetown Players. The Playwrights' Theatre, New York, March 9, 1922.

"Welded." Produced by Macgowan, Jones and O'Neill in association with the Selwyns. 39th Street Theatre, New York, March 17, 1924.

"The Ancient Mariner." Produced by Provincetown Playhouse Inc. Provincetown Playhouse, New York, April 6, 1924.

"All God's Chillun Got Wings." Produced by Provincetown Playhouse Inc. Provincetown Playhouse, New York, May 15, 1924.

"SS. Glencairn." Produced by The Barnstormers. Provincetown, Mass., Aug. 14, 1924.

"Desire Under the Elms." Produced by Provincetown Playhouse Inc. Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, Nov. 11, 1924.

"The Fountain." Produced by Macgowan, Jones, and O'Neill in association with A. L. Jones and Morris Green. Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, Dec. 10, 1925.

"The Great God Brown." Produced by Macgowan, Jones, and O'Neill. Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, Jan. 23, 1926.

"Marco Millions." Produced by Theatre Guild. Guild Theatre, New York, January 9, 1928.

"Strange Interlude." Produced by Theatre Guild. Guild Theatre, New York, Jan. 30, 1928.

"Dynamo." Produced by the Theatre Guild at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York, Feb. 11, 1929.

GEORGE KELLY

HAVING accepted the Pulitzer prize winners arbitrarily as the most distinguished of American playwrights—not for the purpose of starting an argument but merely

as an aid to clarifying the record and making easier the matter of preference—whose name should follow that of Eugene O'Neill, the Abou-Ben-Adhem of the clan?

Either that of George Kelly or Sidney Howard I should say. In recent achievement the records of these two progressives of the theatre have run closely parallel. Each has fathered five major productions since his first play of importance was offered; each has scored two outstanding successes and suffered three failures. Each has won the Pulitzer award once and each has come close to a second award.

Kelly has written "The Torchbearers," "The Show-off," "Craig's Wife," "Daisy Mayme," and "Behold the Bridegroom," in the order named. "The Show-off" and "Craig's Wife" were his successes, the latter winning the coveted medal.

Howard's major productions have been "Swords," "They Knew What They Wanted," "Lucky Sam McCarver," "Ned McCobb's Daughter" and "The Silver Cord." "They Knew What They Wanted" won him the prize and returned him liberal profits. "The Silver Cord" was his second greatest success, and "Ned McCobb's Daughter" a popular third, thanks to the Theatre Guild.

In between Howard adapted "SS. Tenacity," "Casanova" and "Sancho Panza" and collaborated with Edward Sheldon in the writing of "Bewitched."

They are also alike, these, too, in being shy men and reluctant to discuss either themselves or their careers. Both prefer to be represented by their works, and

each insistently and frequently declares that neither the public nor the reporter has any legitimate rights in the role of curiosity seeker.

When I wrote George Kelly, telling him that a waiting world was hanging on the request that he amplify the bare facts concerned with his first peek at daylight in Philadelphia thirty odd years ago and his later career in the theatre, it was weeks before he replied at all. Then he did so with a graceful apology, to which he added—

"Of course I need scarcely suggest the magnitude of the task before you, for certainly a summary of 'Those Who Write Our Plays,' (a tentative title) will necessarily include the citizenry of the known world. And much as I should like to be of assistance, I find myself a trifle temperamental in the matter of inclusion in the book—that is, as far as my personal life is concerned. Isn't there some way in which you can pass me by quietly, and probably just say that I'm a young man who may do something some day? I don't care to what devastation my work is subjected, but I do really dislike any publicity concerning myself. That kind of thing, as far as a writer is concerned, always seems to me like the exhibition of moving picture directors' photographs in front of the cinema theatres. I see no reason for it.

"However, my name is George Kelly—I was born and raised in Philadelphia. I had no early inclination toward the stage—have decidedly less now. I like bridge, golf, riding and travel. The tragedy of my life is the winter. In fact, that is my one genuine distinction

—that I have hated cold weather more than any other human being. And my ability to stay up longer than any one else has never been questioned.

"As to the state of the drama, the theatre, etc.—you cannot tempt me. I'm probably tired: but I'm enormously uninterested.

"This letter sounds rather stupid and smart alecky. I didn't mean it to be. Letters are extremely difficult for me. I'm sure a chat would be infinitely more satisfactory. But, in any case, let me pass,—impersonally."

No playwright of prominence and promise, whatever his own desires in the matter, can live as modestly retired a life as he believes he would enjoy. Most of them have no desire to live modestly. Many accept, either with enthusiasm or because they have been convinced by their showmen backers that it is the wise thing to do, opportunities for public exploitation as an important feature of their play's publicity.

But it is particularly true of the younger and later arrivals in the field that they have become as thoroughly disgusted with the utter silliness of the older forms of publicity as they have with the older types of artificial drama.

When they talk of "debunking" the theatre they embrace the whole theatre scheme, ranging through not only the writing and rehearsing of plays, but also through all accepted methods of presentation and the manner of their advertising.

I am in complete sympathy with the desires of these modernists. And yet I believe they also owe the public

that supports them and their plays some little show of graciousness in satisfying that natural and human interest in their personal lives which their work creates. They are entitled to their normal reticences.

Mr. Kelly, as it happens, hating personal publicity though he does, still manages to be decently obliging about it. Therefore we have become familiar with the essential facts of his career. He was, we also know, one of ten children, and he was probably influenced much more than even he realizes in his choice of a career by the success of his elder brother, Walter Kelly, who for so many years has added to the joy of millions by telling the stories of "The Virginia Judge" in vaudeville.

Of the other eight Kellys I have record of only one. He is Jack Kelly, oarsman, singlesculls Olympic champion in 1920, and now a building contractor in Philadelphia. I should not be surprised if there were a politician or two among the Kellys and I would wager liberally that the girls are all known to the intimate circle as fine wives and mothers.

The George Kelly we know did his bit in the public schools and did a lot of specializing later in those subjects in which he was particularly interested. He was 21 when he reached the theatre. At least he was 21 before much account was taken of what he was doing in the theatre. Then he began his career as an actor. Four years later he was featured in vaudeville in a one-act piece written by Paul Armstrong and called "The Woman Proposes."

Evidently he was a pretty good actor. It was not

long before he was numbered with the headliners, achieving "the spot before closing," which is variety's position of honor.

The next few years the writing urge settled heavily upon the comparatively youthful George and he wrote a number of sketches for his own use. Always a student of the theatre in its relation to audience psychology it is related of Mr. Kelly that he builded his sketches with ruthless deliberation, allowing so many minutes to stab the auditors' interest, so many minutes to develop the first laugh, so many to approach the first dramatic climax. He had as little use for his own stuff, his early associates tell me, as he would have had for that of a stranger if it failed of the purpose for which it was written. His better known sketches included the "Poor Aubrey" from which "The Show-off" was later to grow: "The Flattering Word" and "Finders Keepers."

During his vaudeville days the Kelly sketches were booked mostly by a young woman who had come from St. Louis to work in the offices of the Keith vaudeville interests. Rosalie Stewart was her name and she had grown up close to the theatre, her father having charge of a string of vaudeville houses through the southwest. It was she who kept after young Kelly to write a long play. It was she who foresaw the doom of the dramatic playlet in huge theatres built with an eye to the movies. It was she who, with the late Bert French, produced "The Torchbearers," which was the first long play Kelly wrote.

This was some little time after the Little Theatre urge had attacked amateurs all over the country and

was threatening to take on the dignity of a movement. The movies had moved boldly into the towns of the lesser circuits, occupying all the available theatre space, and the high costs of travel had kept touring troupes devoted to dramatic attractions down to a diminishing minimum in number.

If the drama was to be saved in the hinterland, it was being generously predicted, the Little Theatres would have to save it. Which assertion not only greatly amused young Kelly, but inspired him to expand the idea he had for another vaudeville sketch into a three-act farce comedy. A high-farce comedy would probably be a better classification. "The Torchbearers" proved popular satire for a naturally limited public. Its profits were almost excessively unimportant, but what might be called its editorial success gave the author the confidence he needed and he promptly divorced the mistress vaudeville from his house and began ardently to make up to a legitimate successor. He took "Poor Aubrey" as a character and plot basis: "The Show-off" was born the following fall, and George Kelly became the most talked of playwright of that particular season.

When the Pulitzer prize committee of Columbia College set aside the suggestion of its sub-committee that the Kelly play be given the year's award and gave it to Hatcher Hughes' "Hell-bent fer Heaven" instead there was threatened rioting in the streets and several of the more emotional drama critics grew hysterical in protest.

During this excitement Mr. Kelly preserved a typically dignified calm and announced that he had

begun work on his first serious play. It was ready for production in 1925 and came forth as "Craig's Wife." Popular success did not follow as quickly as it did in the case of "The Show-off." In fact there was great disappointment in certain circles that Mr. Kelly had not stuck to comedy. But "Craig's Wife" gradually builded a public that was of far greater inportance to the Kelly future than any he had won up to that time. Women playgoers in particular rallied to it as an incisive and bitingly true study of an unlovely member of their sex, and when the Pulitzer prize was awarded the play in the spring it came into a new popularity.

Mr. Kelly returned to comedy in 1926 with "Daisy Mayme," a further exposure of truly-drawn American home characters none too flattering of racial pride but ever so satisfying to students of native character. His success was again only moderate, though the play ran the better part of the season. In 1927 his contribution was "Behold the Bridegroom." None of the Kelly plays so completely divided the playwright's growing public as did this study of a lady waster who falls desperately in love with a man and loses her grip on life when she realizes that he holds her and her kind cheap. Those who liked the play spoke of it as the most purposeful and important of the playwright's character studies. Those who may have missed its intended significance were moved to classify it as a trivial and incredible exhibit.

Mr. Kelly has never been one to talk much of himself or ever to discuss his methods of work. In the earlier days of his success he was occasionally quoted by his interviewers. Replying to one who ventured the

familiar query as to what he considered the outstanding qualities necessary to a playwright's success he said:

"I believe that first one must have a gift for the theatre, a natural appreciation of its values, an understanding of its exigencies and an intuitive faculty for life itself. All the rest is spontaneous. . . .

"Concerning technique, I have very decided notions. I am opposed to strict adherence to a plot formula. It is a matter of 'those who live and those who die,' a perpetually variable thing. A plot formula is a good prop, but more than this it could never be. Following this idea I believe that 'The Three Sisters,' by Chekhov, is the finest play I have ever seen. It is my idea of the theatre."

As interviewers pressed him during that early period he became more definite and a little less patient. I remember his answers on one occasion following each other something like this:

"I haven't any method. . . . I don't know where my plots come from. . . . I follow no particular formula. . . . I don't know anything about play construction. . . . I don't want to know anything about it. . . . I don't want to know a thing about what I should not do. . . . I don't want to ruin a chance to write a good play through knowing a lot of don'ts. . . . Whatever I know about the construction of one of my own plays I learned about it after the play was written. . . . I did not crush it into some mold prescribed by someone else. . . . I just started with some bit of truth as I saw it being lived around me and allowed it to grow in its own way. . . . The truth is all that counts. . . . If a

thing is true it can be acted and audiences will go to see it. There's the whole proposition in a nutshell." [1]

At this time Mr. Kelly was pleased to admit that he had no ambition to write artistic successes. He was interested only in box office successes. And even they gave him comparatively little satisfaction.

"Writing is hard work," he was free to insist. "I don't like hard work. . . . Seeing my name up in electric lights does not give me the thrill you might expect. I know how much it has cost me and I am the only one that does know."

There is no reason to believe that this creed does not still embody most of the George Kelly convictions.

Mr. Kelly's produced plays include:

"The Torchbearers." Produced by Stewart and French. Forty-eighth St. Theatre, New York, Aug. 29, 1922.

"The Show-off." Produced by Stewart and French, Inc. The Playhouse, New York, Feb. 5, 1924.

"Craig's Wife." Produced by Rosalie Stewart. Morosco Theatre, New York, Oct. 12, 1925.

"Daisy Mayme." Produced by Rosalie Stewart. Playhouse, New York, Oct. 25, 1926.

"Behold the Bridegroom." Produced by Rosalie Stewart. Cort Theatre, New York, Dec. 26, 1928.

SIDNEY HOWARD

SIDNEY HOWARD, as a personality, is an even more elusive individual than George Kelly. He, too, believes

[1] Interview with Frank Lee Short in the Christian Science Monitor, Sept. 23, 1924.

that a playwright's place is in the theatre. Also that what a playwright has to say he should say in terms of the drama.

Talk to the managers with whom Mr. Howard has worked and you will learn that they hold him a little bit in awe. He boasts a cultural background. This, with the average play producer, inspires respect mixed generously with suspicion. But they are keenly eager to predict great things of his future.

On the face of the record Mr. Howard, after having successfully attended to the matter of being born in Oakland, California, in 1891, took with the usual reluctance to being educated. He kept at it, however, or was kept at it by his not overly indulgent parents, until he reached the University of California. He was graduated in 1915.

The year he graduated certain eminent diagnosticians thought they discovered a spotty condition in his lung tissue. Mr. Howard was not at all convinced that they were right, but agreed to spend a year in Switzerland on the chance that they might be.

Having been an enthusiast of the theatre through his college years—an enthusiast who wrote or planned pageants, class plays, and such—Mr. Howard decided on his return from Europe, to study drama with Prof. George Pierce Baker at Harvard. But just after he was well started a certain historical war was announced and the drama student left English 47, to drive an ambulance on the Saloniki front. After that he transferred to the American air forces in France.

Before the fuss was over he had achieved the command of a combat squadron and a feeling about

aviation that has, so far as report goes, kept him on the ground ever since.

Mr. Howard came home from the war still interested in writing, but not particularly concerned about the drama. The theatre in those days, and, particularly to those who had played parts in the most tragic drama of our times, must naturally have seemed rather a puny, painted thing. He went in for what might be called radical reporting. He did a series of stories for the New Republic on the industrial spy system, later using the material in a novel called "The Labor Spy." He did a series of stories for Mr. Hearst's International Magazine which exposed the traffic in narcotics, and accepted an assignment as a sort of war correspondent in Pennsylvania when a coal miners' strike was on. He was, his employers agree, very good at these jobs.

Yet when he was ready to make his début as a playwright, or at least when the opportunity offered, he came forward with a highly poetic drama of Italian background called "Swords." Clare Eames, making progress at the time as an actress, brought the play to Brock Pemberton, whose first success as a producer had been won the season before with the comedy "Enter Madame" starring Gilda Veresi.

"Swords" was done with Miss Eames in the rôle of Fiamma, a beautiful lady imprisoned in the castle of Ugoline, a German noble of dishonorable intentions who wielded a great and wicked power in the years following the Crusades. During rehearsals of "Swords" the young author's interest in his first play expanded apace until it included also his first star,

and though his play, beautifully produced, with a handsome setting by Robert Edmund Jones, proved too fine a romance for the playgoing taste of those post-war days, his suit prospered and he and Miss Eames were married shortly after the withdrawal of the drama.

For the next season or two Mr. Howard devoted himself, as any young husband establishing a home might be expected to do, to such jobs of playwriting as came to hand. These included the adaptation of a piece from the French called "SS. Tenacity," and another the "Casanova" which Gilbert Miller and A. H. Woods produced with Lowell Sherman playing the great lover of the title and Katharine Cornell the beautiful lady of his current amour. To this period belongs, too, another fancifully poetic drama, called "Bewitched," which Howard wrote in collaboration with Edward Sheldon.

A few months later came the change in the Howard product and the turn in the Howard fortunes. He came home from an extended work spell in Europe with the manuscript of an original play entitled "They Knew What They Wanted" and the skeleton of another later to be known as "Lucky Sam McCarver."

The story of "They Knew What They Wanted" was based, the playwright said, upon certain adventures of his youth spent in the Napa valley in California and concerned characters with whose thought, speech and manner of life he was entirely familiar. It was immediately accepted by the Theatre Guild, produced in November and scored what is known to Broadway as an overnight hit. It was bold in speech and that was the year that such boldness had been

accepted as a dramatists' strike for freedom of expression, following the production of the epoch-making "What Price Glory?"

It was strongly sexed, powerfully dramatic, expertly acted by Pauline Lord, Richard Bennett and Glenn Anders. It effectively obliterated all memories of the writer and adapter of the "Swords"-"Bewitched" series and established in his place a modern of moderns who was certainly to be reckoned with.

The following spring when the Pulitzer prize was given to "They Knew What They Wanted" instead of to "What Price Glory?" another swirling tempest of charges and counter charges was loosened by certain protesting and, it may be, partisan experts of the drama, but it served positively to clinch the new-won position of Mr. Howard.

With this success back of him, and with a determination to raise Miss Eames to deserved eminence as an actress, Mr. Howard the next season centered all his hopes and energies on the production of "Lucky Sam McCarver," which he personally directed. Miss Eames appeared as a representative of a fraying New York aristocracy who marries the physically dominating proprietor of a New York night club, fails in her effort to remold him nearer to her heart's desire and disgusts him with her preferred group of social parasites. After their separation Carlotta sinks to the lower social levels and dies of heart disease the night the still dominant Sam calls to offer her an allowance.

"McCarver" was a critics' success but the public refused to endorse the verdict. The disappointment

to the Howards was by report, more or less devastating. But hope crushed rises promptly to flower again in any real playwright's heart. Though there were no other Howard plays offered that season, two were written and both sold to the Theatre Guild.

The first of these was "Ned McCobb's Daughter," produced the succeeding November, and the other "The Silver Cord," which was added to the Guild repertory a month later. Both were successful. "The Silver Cord," in fact, is considered by many to be Mr. Howard's most important drama and was frequently mentioned as a likely candidate for Pulitzer honors that year.

"Ned McCobb's Daughter" tells of Carrie Callahan's adventure the time her worthless husband's equally worthless but craftier brother, a bootlegger from Boston, agrees to save Carrie's husband from jail if she will help him smuggle a boatload of liquor through the states. Carrie agrees and then tricks the bootlegger to the advantage of her soul's peace and her material well being. The part of Carrie was written for and splendidly characterized by Miss Eames.

"The Silver Cord" is a psychological study of a selfishly possessive mother who seeks with such power and craft as she is capable of commanding to rule the lives of her two sons long after they are grown men. She threatens the married happiness of one, and breaks off the engagement of the other. She is effectively circumvented in the end through the efforts of the fighting individualist who is the older son's wife. This part, too, was designed for and greatly beloved

of Miss Eames. Its assignment to another actress is said to have threatened the friendly relations of Mr. Howard and the Theatre Guild, which still holds options on all his plays for a term of years.

The Guild did not exercise its option on the next play offered by Mr. Howard. This was a work called "Salvation," in the writing of which the playwright collaborated with Charles MacArthur. The collaboration, Broadway assumed, was prompted by his friendship for Mr. MacArthur, co-author of "Lulu Belle," or for Mr. MacArthur's uncle, Edward Sheldon. Whatever may have prompted it, the association was not happy. "Salvation" proved rather a cheap and thoroughly unconvincing drama which an Arthur Hopkins production failed to save.

Mr. Howard's produced plays include:

"Swords." Produced by Brock Pemberton. National Theatre, New York, September 1, 1921.

"SS. Tenacity." Produced by Augustin Duncan. Belmont Theatre, New York, January 2, 1922.

"Casanova." Produced by A. H. Woods and Gilbert Miller. Empire Theatre, New York, Sept. 26, 1923.

"Sancho Panza." Produced by Russell Janney. Hudson Theatre, New York, November 26, 1923.

"They Knew What They Wanted." Produced by Theatre Guild. Garrick Theatre, New York, Nov. 24, 1924.

"Bewitched." Produced by John Cromwell, Inc. National Theatre, New York, October 1, 1924.

"Lucky Sam McCarver." Produced by William A. Brady, Jr., Dwight Deere Wiman and John Cromwell. Playhouse, New York, October 21, 1925.

"Ned McCobb's Daughter." Produced by Theatre Guild. John Golden Theatre, New York, Nov. 29, 1926.

"The Silver Cord." Produced by Theatre Guild. John Golden Theatre, New York, December 20, 1926.

"Salvation" (with Charles McArthur. Produced by Arthur Hopkins at the Empire Theatre, New York, Jan. 31, 1928.

PAUL GREEN

I AM putting Paul Green fourth in this list of Pulitzer prize winning playwrights for no other reason than that I think if he does not belong there now the chances are excellent that he will win the place, and possibly a higher one, for himself before another decade has passed.

My reason for the volunteered optimism is inspired not alone by the quality of his two popular failures, "In Abraham's Bosom" and "The Field God," but also by the character and depth of his unproduced plays and the facts of his career.

You probably could not convince young Mr. Green (he is 34 now and for some years has been a member of the faculty at the University of North Carolina) that he has suffered any particular handicap in his climb toward the Pulitzer prize. Playwriting has been his avocation and his pleasure. But the picture of him spending twenty-three of his thirty-four years on a North Carolina farm, penned in by a narrower horizon than even Thoreau knew, and yet producing an actable folk drama of so human and so wide an appeal

that it brought him finally to the attention of a nation's theatre capital, and won him the theatre's most coveted award—this picture leads me to look upon his success as being singularly hard won.

New York's introduction to Paul Green, dramatist, came through two channels. He wrote the short play, "The No 'Count Boy," with which the Dallas Little Theatre players won the Belasco trophy in the Little Theatre Tournament of 1925, and he was formally presented as a writing man by Barrett H. Clark in a preface written for a book of his short plays carrying the title of "Lonesome Road."

So far as "The No 'Count Boy" introduction went, no one paid much attention to it. Not many members of an average audience are sufficiently interested in unknown playwrights even to inquire their names. Such credit as they are pleased to bestow upon such a production they give to "the boy who played the harmonica" or, being a bit more generous, and a little better informed, to "that chap, Hinsdell, who directed the piece."

But Green did become a playwright with prospects as a result of the Dallas players excellent performance of this playlet, which is one of his most delightful compositions. There were references to his work and his promise in the dramatic columns. A few of the more alert managers began to inquire about him, or to remember that they had turned back certain Negro plays of his which had been submitted to them.

People who read plays and playbooks were made conscious of the young Carolinian's existence by the praise of him by Mr. Clark and by the satisfaction

with which a few hundred of them read "Lonesome Road."

And then, after several commercial producers had refused it, the Provincetown Players put "In Abraham's Bosom" into rehearsal and presented it in their converted stable theatre in Macdougall Street, Greenwich village.

This was in December, 1926. The 30th, to be exact. And uptown the holiday influx of new drama was keeping the play reviewers a little more than comfortably busy. They sent their assistants into the village to report the Green drama and the assistants returned saying, in general, that "In Abraham's Bosom" was just another of those Negro plays, done by a Negro cast, professional only in so far as the Negro theatre has attained professional status. It was, they thought, nothing much to worry about.

A few of the reviewers of more serious mind did get into the Village to see "Abraham" and returned with reports for the most part similarly calm and noncommittal, but occasionally stirring with enthusiasm.

And among the play's visitors were the subcommittee of the Pulitzer prize board to whom had been assigned the task of recommending a play for that year's award.

Shortly rumors began to circulate along Broadway that "Abraham's Bosom" was seriously being considered as the Pulitzer winner. This stimulated interest in the play just about the time the Provincetowners were preparing to withdraw it. Raising additional capital from the always hopeful backers of such enterprises they moved the play to the cradle

of the Theatre Guild, the Garrick theatre in 35th Street, and the run was extended several weeks. The play was now seen for the first time by many of the reviewers who had missed it before, and several were enthusiastic in praise of it. But still the public remained away, and finally the engagement was brought to a close.

In May the Pulitzer award was made. Again the Provincetown Players reviewed "Abraham" in their Village theatre, and this time for six or eight weeks they did a profitable business. The Green drama registered something like 200 performances, counting its numerous revivals, before its run was ended.

Now Broadway learned something about Paul Green. At least Broadway came to know him as a young North Carolinian who, like Eugene O'Neill, had started modestly, working in the short-play medium with characters and life episodes with which he was most familiar through personal contact.

Still, the "regular," or commercial managers, were not sufficiently impressed with the Green drama to become competitive in bidding for it. When "The Field God," announced as the second long play by the Pulitzer prize winner, was offered for production the rights to it were rather easily acquired by an obscure producer named Wolfe, representing a syndicate known as Edwin R. Wolfe, Inc. Mr. Wolfe had had some experience with the stock companies which represent the next step in experimentation. The fact that he was prepared and even eager to make a cash payment in advance may have influenced Mr. Green's representatives in Mr. Wolfe's favor, for cash, in those days,

was a little scarce in North Carolina college circles.

"The Field God" was produced in April, at the Greenwich Village theatre, which is at least nearer Broadway than the Provincetown location. Fritz Leiber, Shakespearean actor, played the titular rôle, that of a defiant religionist who runs second in a contest with the representatives of God in his somewhat benighted Southern community.

Again press comment was friendly but lacking in superlatives, and the competing drama, being strongly intrenched this late in the season, "The Field God" did not do well. Brought uptown later it languished for a few additional weeks, or so long as the Wolfe money held out, and was then withdrawn.

It is typical of young Mr. Green that, coming to New York to see "The Field God" in production, he held off the reporters who sought to interview him as a Pulitzer prize winner with the simple statement that he preferred to let his plays speak for themselves. He liked them, he admitted, and he thought if he were living in New York "The Field God" was one of the plays he would be willing to pay money to see. But further than that he was pleasant but uncommunicative.

As I hurry along with this chapter word comes that a third long play by Mr. Green, "The House of Connelly," has been sold to the Theatre Guild. If the gods favor this production Paul Green should, so far as the theatre is concerned, be what is known as made. The Provincetown Players have also bought another play called "Tread the Green Grass."

Going back to his beginnings for the sake of the rec-

ord, Professor Green was born on a North Carolina farm hard by the village of Lillington. The year was 1894. As a boy he collected stone bruises, adventures in the woods and probably an occasional lamming for being at the swimming hole when he should have been at other tasks. He grew up as a farmer's son, working hard through the long spring and summer and getting such schooling as he could a few months each winter.

He had a chance to attend Buie's Creek academy when he reached his middle teens and graduated in 1914, when he was 20. Then he taught country school for two years "saving up" to go to the University of North Carolina. He was admitted in 1916, and was just settling down to intensive work, including that of studying drama with Professor Koch, when the United States decided to enter the great war.

The Green war record, as he states it, is quite uneventful. But to anyone familiar with what it takes to earn promotion in any man's army it means a lot. Paul Green started as a private, became a corporal, a sergeant, and then a sergeant-major with the 105th Engineers, of the Thirtieth Division, and later, in Paris, was promoted to a second lieutenancy.

He had four months' service on the Western front and then the armistice brought him home. He went back to the university in 1919 and was graduated in 1921. He took post-graduate work at North Carolina and at Cornell, and became a member of the faculty of his alma mater, where, as noted, he is still teaching philosophy.

There are two who are closely associated with such success as has come to this son of the south. First and foremost is Professor Frederick Henry Koch, instructor in dramatic literature at the University of North Carolina since 1918, and organizer of the Carolina Playmakers. Professor Koch, who probably has done as much as any man in establishing the standards and inspiring the achievements of the Little Theatres scattered around the country, particularly those connected with schools and colleges, was a constant source of help and encouragement to Student Green, produced practically all his first short plays, and brought him eventually to that wider attention that has contributed so promisingly to his fame.

The other is the Barrett H. Clark, previously mentioned, who, as a reviewer of books on the drama, was largely responsible for first bringing young Green's printed plays to attention, and for the circulation later of the best of them among the producing managers. Finally it was Mr. Clark who arranged for the production of "In Abraham's Bosom," "The Field God," "The House of Connelly" and "Tread the Green Grass."

It is fitting that definite estimate of Paul Green's standing among contemporary dramatists should await the further development of his unquestioned gifts. He is ruled by a passion for truthfulness and simplicity, his sense of drama is sure and fine and his insight into human character both searching and understanding.

Gradually he will, in spirit at least, move out from

his immediate environment. As Eugene O'Neill gradually left the foc'sle of the SS. Glencairn, and approached the wider reaches of the world's stage, so Paul Green will one day move beyond the arbitrary borders of cabin life in the south, as it affects both white and black. Being a philosopher with the soul of a poet he represents the perfect type of progressive playwright.

As Mr. Clark has written of him, he has already shown "an extraordinary adaptability in form and style: he can write tragedy and comedy, drab realism and highly imaginative fantasy."

"I feel," continues this critic, "that his greatest gifts are his instinctive talent for seizing upon a dramatic situation, his poetic imagination, and his intuitive knowledge of character. I believe that poetic imagination is what our stage stands most in need of. We have skilled technicians aplenty, and in O'Neill a great artist of many aspects. But as yet we have no genuine folk dramatist besides Paul Green. If he were at this moment to cease writing he would be entitled to a place of honor in the development of the American drama. But he is only beginning. Was any beginner ever better equipped?"

Mr. Green's produced plays:

"The No 'Count Boy." Little Theatre Tournament. Wallack's Theatre, New York, May 6, 1925.

"In Abraham's Bosom." Produced by Provincetown Players. Provincetown Theatre, New York, December 30, 1926.

"The Field God." Produced by Edwin R. Wolfe, Inc. Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, April 21, 1927.

OWEN DAVIS

TEN Pulitzer prizes have been won by eight American playwrights. Previously we have sketched the careers of four of them—Eugene O'Neill, George Kelly, Sidney Howard and Paul Green. We still have Owen Davis, Hatcher Hughes, Zona Gale, and Jesse Lynch Williams to account for.

In output, in the matter of his importance to the past if not to the future of the native theatre, Owen Davis should lead this quartet.

He most reasonably can be called the Lopé de Vega of the American drama. He has in thirty years written nearly 200 plays. Of course Lopé, if I remember my Brander Matthews, managed to turn out something like 2,200 pieces, but Mr. Davis is still writing.

This record is largely due to the fact that practically as soon as he left college, after he tried briefly, very briefly, being an actor, he embarked upon a career as a journeyman playwright selling his services to the producers of the cheaper melodramas and standing ready, day or night, to start, finish, patch or completely rewrite anything at all in the play line.

I have often suspected that Mr. Davis had a night bell at his door by means of which he could be summoned to the aid of a dying rehearsal or called to the accouchement of a promising idea.

At the time of the Davis decision to desert the profession of civil engineering for which he had prepared at the University of Tennessee, (1888–89:) and Harvard (1890–93) most of the melodramas were

being supplied the native stage by Theodore Kremer, enthusiastically assisted by Charles A. Blaney and the Charles W. Taylor whom Laurette Cooney married to become Laurette Taylor and the star of most of his shows.

Mr. Davis, youthful, ambitious and a little socialistic, could see no reason why this particular monopoly should endure. With the intention of correcting it he called upon the producing firm of Harris, Sullivan and Woods.

The Harris was the Sam H. Harris who was later to become George M. Cohan's partner in play production and for the last eight years has been an independent producer. The Sullivan was known as "Big Tim" and wielded great influence politically. The Woods was the redoubtable Albert Herman. It was, as I recall Mr. Davis's statement of the circumstances, Mr. Woods, whom he met. Their conversation, boiled down to nothing much, ran something like this:

"I can write as good melodramas as Theodore Kremer," said Mr. Davis.

"Show me!" replied Mr. Woods.

A week later Mr. Davis, who worked slowly in those days, submitted to Mr. Woods the manuscript of a four- or five-act melodrama entitled "The Confessions of a Wife." Another fortnight and he came in with "The Gambler of the West." From that beginning he gradually wrote his way into the melodrama field until he, and not Mr. Kremer, was the chief contributor of popular plays. He wrote under many aliases and frequently he had as many as eight dramas in circulation at one time.

Sometimes he wrote a play around a flashy bit of scenery which Mr. Woods had either bought or thought up. Frequently his sources of inspiration were lurid stories in the newspapers. Given a fair start, a lot of lead pencils, and a good plot and Davis would produce a five-act drama in from two days to a week. He did a series of working girl classics that included "Bertha the Sewing Machine Girl," "Nellie the Beautiful Cloak Model" and "Edna the Pretty Typewriter." These made him a lot of money but still figure most frequently in his bad dreams.

Then, in 1910, the moving picture had, after a troublesome infancy, begun to walk. Little by little the novelty and the greater opportunities for spectacular drama offered by the screen, combined with the fact that a movie could be sold to the public for any price from a nickel up, developed a competition that even the 10-20-30 drama could not meet. Mr. Davis, having long felt the urge to write a better type of drama than any he had done before, agreed with Mr. Woods that now they should quit the Bowery and invade the Broadway, or "Two-dollar," market.

Mr. Davis's first bid for attention was made with a drama he wrote for Marguerite Clark. It was called "The Wishing Ring" but did not amount to much. Not, at least as much as Mr. Davis had hoped for. His second try was with a play for Laurette Taylor in her pre-Peg days. This one was entitled "Lola." Then during the war years there followed a series of fairly successful plays, most of them with William A. Brady as producer and Alice Brady, his daughter, as star. These included "The Family Cupboard," "Sin-

ners," "Forever After," "Opportunity," and "At 9.45."

By this time Mr. Davis had established himself as a fairly successful writer of the better drama, but he still was a slave to those stage conventions that featured the pattern drama of a passing day.

In 1921 he made a second determined effort to command the respect of his critics. He wrote his first tragi-comedy, "The Detour." It told of a farmer's wife who skimps and saves for years that her daughter may go to the city and study art, thus realizing an ambition denied her mother. But in the end not only does a ruthless husband confiscate the savings and put them into the truck farm, which the wife loathes, but the daughter's talent is revealed as nothing to worry about.

Mr. Davis was generously praised for this most creative and most sanely imagined of his dramas, and though the play was a financial failure its production probably gave him more satisfaction than had that of any play he had written up to that time.

He followed "The Detour" the next season with another tragi-comedy of New England types. This one was called "Icebound" and told another tragic story of a native Yankee group living in the state of Maine. They were folks who were "icebound within and without" the better part of their lives. The matriarch of the family, Jordan by name, dies and leaves her money to a distant relative, Jane Crosby, much to the disgust of her nearer kin.

Jane stays on after the old lady passes, manages the

farm, brings a kind of order out of the domestic chaos, makes something of a man of Ben Jordan, a wild younger son, falls deeply in love with Ben and is hurt cruelly by him. Then Jane elects to turn the property over to Ben and go her way. Ben won't let her. She agrees to stay on, take what happiness she can get and be a good sport about the rest.

"Icebound," a revealingly true character comedy, won Mr. Davis the Pulitzer prize for that year. He was very happy over that experience. After twenty odd years of struggle he had "made" Broadway at last! The creator of "Bertha the Sewing Machine Girl" was a Pulitzer prize winner.

He has had a number of successes since then, notably the farce, "The Nervous Wreck." A second farce, "Easy Come, Easy Go," was fairly successful, and an adaptation he made of the Scott Fitzgerald novel, "The Great Gatsby," did nicely. The last few seasons he has been devoting himself to the motion picture in the studios of the Famous Players-Lasky group, having been won away from the speaking stage by a contract that reads something like a bond issue. Once or twice he has devoted a week end or two to the drama. "Tonight at 12" is the result of one such interlude.

It may be Owen Davis is through writing plays. Born in 1874, in Portland, Me., he has achieved such fame as pleases him and more of a fortune than a man of his taste and modest family obligations can ever spend comfortably. He may therefore retire, though those who know him best do not expect he will.

He is more likely to write another prize-winning drama as soon as he is through with the movies.

In 1902 Mr. Davis married Elizabeth Drury Breyer of Chicago, Ill., at that time a leading woman in one of the Davis plays. Their two sons, grown to manhood, are both successfully embarked in theatricals, Donald as a writer of scenarios and titles in Hollywood, and Owen Jr. as an actor who took the playwriting course in Professor Baker's class at Yale a year ago, thinking that some day he might want to write plays, too.

There is a Davis apartment home in Park avenue, and there are Davis family gatherings during the summer at the Lake Placid Club, in upper New York. It is one of the happiest of stage families, which is another cause of complete satisfaction to the playwright. His offstage activities include a considerable amount of work in the interests of the American Society of American Dramatists, and the Dramatists' Guild, which he has served as president.

Mr. Davis's produced plays since 1920 have been:

"At 9.45." Produced by Wm. A. Brady. Playhouse, New York, June 1919.

"Opportunity." Produced by Wm. A. Brady. 48th St. Theatre, New York, September 1920.

"The Detour." Produced by Messrs. Shubert. Astor Theatre, New York, September 1921.

"Up the Ladder." Produced by Wm. A Brady. Playhouse, New York, March 1922.

"The World We Live In," (an adaptation of "The Insect Comedy.)" Produced by Wm. A. Brady. Jolson Theatre, New York, November 1922.

"Icebound." Produced by Harris, Lewis and Gordon. Harris Theatre, New York, February 1923.

"The Nervous Wreck." Produced by Harris, Lewis and Gordon. Harris Theatre, New York, October 1923.

"The Haunted House." Produced by Harris, Lewis and Gordon. Cohan Theatre, New York, September 1924.

"Lazybones." Produced by Sam Harris. Cort Theatre, New York, October 1924.

"Easy Come, Easy Go." Produced by Harris, Lewis and Gordon. Cohan Theatre, New York, October 1924.

"Beware of Widows." Produced by Crosby Gage. Elliot Theatre, New York, December 1925.

"The Great Gatsby." Produced by Wm. A. Brady. Ambassador Theatre, New York, February 1926.

"The Donovan Affair." Produced by Al Lewis. Fulton Theatre, New York, September 1926.

"The Triumphant Bachelor." Produced by Donald Davis. Biltmore Theatre, New York, September 1927.

"Carry On." Produced by Carl Reed at the Masque Theatre, New York, Jan. 23, 1928.

HATCHER HUGHES

HATCHER HUGHES, whose "Hell-bent fer Heaven" was awarded the Pulitzer medal in 1924, spends more time teaching others the fundamentals of playwriting at Columbia University than he does practicing the art. There is usually a class of a hundred or more under-graduate Ibsens seeking advice and counsel from him, and, if you should inquire of Professor Hughes, this takes a lot out of a man.

I have a suspicion, too, that playwriting professors,

after going over the thirty-six original dramatic situations day after day and month after month with their eager students, just naturally come to believe that nothing much can be done about any of them anyway.

Yet Professor Hughes numbers the teaching of playwriting as third in his list of preferred employments. "Outside the theatre, farming and trout fishing have been the two great passions of my life," he wrote in answer to my query. "Teaching playwriting is only a poor third. But occasionally a student writes something that seems as important as a strike from a three-pound trout. In my heart, of course, I know that this is only an illusion."

He was awarded the Pulitzer prize, as recorded, in 1924 for the best American play produced during the year 1923. That was the season George Kelly's "The Show-off" was a huge comedy success and there was a division in the committee. Owen Johnson, novelist, voted and campaigned rather strenuously for "The Show-off." Professor William Lyon Phelps of Yale selected Lee Wilson Dodd's "The Changelings" as his first and "The Show-off" as his second choice. Professor Clayton Hamilton, the third member of the subcommittee, voted for "Hell-bent fer Heaven."

When the sub-committee vote was submitted to the main committee of award the prize was given to the Hughes drama, followed by mutterings on the left.

Mr. Johnson issued a statement to the public declaring the majority vote of the committee was for "The Show-off" and resigned from the committee. Professor Phelps endorsed Mr. Johnson's statement

but graciously agreed that the parent committee doubtless had a right to its own opinion. Professor Hamilton maintained a discreet silence and Professor Hughes expressed a dignified regret that such things could be in an otherwise pleasant world.

"Hell-bent" was Professors Hughes' third play to reach production. Previously, in the provinces, he had seen a farce of his called "A Marriage Made in Heaven" played with some success. He also had written "Wake-up, Jonathan" in collaboration with Elmer Rice. This was played with fair success by Mrs. Fiske during the season of 1920–21. The story of an old-time masterful husband who, separated from his wife and children for years, tries to bully, then to bribe and finally to beg his way back into the heart of his family, it pleased the Fiske following. Professor Hughes admits that he was pleased with that play's success and as satisfied as could be expected. "I had no illusions about its being a great piece of dramatic literature," says he, which should prove that being one's own severest critic is humbling as well as helpful.

The Pulitzer winner was followed by another play of the benighted folk of the south called "Ruint." This told of a young northerner who was seeking to carry enlightenment to the mountain districts by way of the missionary schools. He made the mistake of kissing the prettiest girl in his class as they were walking home from school through the laurel patches. A jealous and suspicious neighbor observed the kiss and reported it to the girl's father. Assuming that his daughter had been "ruint" the father organizes a lynch-

ing party. The girl, hurt by the teacher's admission that his kisses were not to be taken seriously, allows the party to take its natural course in the hope that the teacher will still be forced to marry her.

The innocent and well meaning youth is tarred, feathered and ridden out of town on a rail at the play's finish. Its audiences found "Ruint" amusing in comedy but none too convincing as drama.

Professor Hughes is not discouraged. "In spite of professors of playwriting, critics, Drama Leagues, and numerous other instruments for torturing the drama and the theatre onto a higher plane," he writes, "they have persistently remained among the things that are rotten in the state of Denmark. As such I accept them and find them fairly interesting. Sometimes they give me thrills all up and down my spine.

"I really enjoy writing a play once I get hooked into it. My ambition is to write one that will please me and get it produced in a way that will not be too much of a shock."

Professor Hughes, to complete the record, was born in Polkville, N. C., but jumped the borders into South Carolina as soon as he was seven years old. He went to the public schools and then went to the University of North Carolina, from which he was graduated in 1907. He did considerable writing as an undergraduate, stories which sold to the newspapers and at least one farcical burlesque—"to get even with the faculty."

He taught English at the University of North Carolina for two years after he graduated, studied at Columbia with Professor Brander Matthews in

1911 and became Professor Matthews' assistant a year later. Save for the time he spent at the front as a captain in the 18th division he has been there ever since.

Hatcher Hughes' produced plays, since 1920, are:

"Wake-up Jonathan" (with Elmer Rice). Produced by Sam H. Harris. Henry Miller Theatre, New York, Jan. 17, 1921.

"Hell-bent fer Heaven." Produced by Marc Klaw, Inc. Klaw Theatre, New York, Jan. 4, 1924.

"Ruint." Produced by Provincetown Players. Provincetown Theatre, New York, April 7, 1925.

ZONA GALE

THERE have been many satisfying and a few momentous events in Zona Gale's life to date. She was graduated with honors from the University of Wisconsin, getting her A.B. in 1895 and her M.L. in 1899. She was made an honorary Phi Beta Kappa, Western Reserve. She was elected, in 1923, to the Board of Regents of her alma mater. Out of college she has won fame as a novelist.

But I venture to assert that the thrill of none of these experiences equalled any one of several thrills Miss Gale collected during the year 1920. This was the year her novel, "Miss Lulu Bett," was first acclaimed, then dramatized, produced as a play, worked into a quasi-popular success and, to cap its adventures, awarded the Pulitzer prize as the best American play of the year.

Miss Gale insists that Brock Pemberton is responsible for the success of "Miss Lulu Bett" as a play and of Miss Gale as a dramatist. Mr. Pemberton assures me that the success of the play, as well as that of the novel, are quite easily traceable to Miss Gale's native abilities. I am of the opinion that both are quite right.

It was Mr. Pemberton who first saw a play in the novel. It was Miss Gale who suggested that perhaps she might be able to write it. She had had a little experience writing for the stage. At least the Washington Square Players had produced a one-act drama of hers called "Neighbors."

"Her first script was very little different from the one we produced," Mr. Pemberton admitted when I asked him to recall the experience. "After the opening, when it developed that the construction was a little loose, we called in a carpenter who gave some ideas about tightening it up, but in the end Miss Gale had to do all the dialogue and the carpenter's contribution was slight.

"She is a forceful speaker, too," Mr. Pemberton went on, as one will when enthusiasm for the subject spurs the interest. "This came as a surprise to me because she is such a wraith of a human being. I think the first time I heard her speak was when we gave a performance at Sing Sing before opening 'Lulu' at the Belmont. Between acts she addressed the prisoners and the poise and skill with which she filled that assignment was great. It hadn't been such an easy evening for her either, for early in it she had sat in a box with Chapin, up for wife murder. He had been her city editor on the Evening World twenty years before

when she broke into writing and here she was giving him a private performance of her first play."

Certainly there was a thrill in that adventure for the favorite authoress of Portage, Wis., and, other centers. Miss Gale was born in Portage, in 1874. Out of college, and liking to write, she went in for newspaper work, first in Milwaukee (1895–1901) and then in New York.

She always has had the stage urge, however. Wrote plays and produced them as a youngster, beginning at four with a reproduction of Little Eva's heavenward flight and continuing at fourteen with a new art drama which she tried unsuccessfully to sell the neighborhood actors. They voted it too refined and a little silly, Miss Gale recalls, and then turned their attention to a farce called "A Box of Monkeys."

Before "Miss Lulu Bett" the Washington Square Players had produced two short plays, "Neighbors" and "Uncle Jimmy." After "Lulu" Miss Gale wrote "Mr. Pitt" which was produced, also by Mr. Pemberton, in 1924. Bett and Pitt. Companion characters, male and female, created she them. The Bett story is that of a love-starved spinster who is tricked into a mock marriage with a practical joker, discovers that the marriage is real, goes on her bridal tour, learns that her husband is already married and returns to her home-town drudgery crushed but a little triumphant. To help the sale at the box office, Lulu's husband was permitted eventually to return and announce the death of his first wife.

Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, represents the lonesome and misunderstood bachelor. He is a canned

goods salesman travelling the corn belt. He is crude but honest, and naturally sympathetic. It is his sympathy that appeals to Barbara Ellsworth, whose father is dead and who needs a man around the house. She marries Pitt, tires of him and runs away with a trombonist. Pitt goes to the Klondike, wins a fortune, returns years after to renew contact with his grown son and discovers that the boy, home from college, is quite as much ashamed of his father as his mother used to be.

Tragedies of the misunderstanding and the misunderstood. There is still a third play needed to complete the triology. Perhaps Miss Gale will write it one of these days. And win another Pulitzer prize with it. Many a stranger thing than that has happened in the theatre. And she at least thinks seriously and often of the drama.

"As to the present state of the drama," she wrote, "I feel as if some tremendous new power were trying to push it into life as it is lived—some power whose first manifestation is to drive men mad, because they cannot receive it. In the course of this madness a great many plays are written and produced, and most of these give proof of an origin beyond the fixed, the crystallized, the set, the certain. No matter how terrible they are, they now echo to new measures, follow new extentions of the forms of art, and of the flow of form. I have never cared so little to see plays, but I have never felt so sure that new forms of drama are in the making. And the plays that are fine are thrillingly fine. Also, when I read the work of certain re-

viewers—in the magazines, in some of the newspapers and in modern books on the theatre—I feel that the well-known new day for the drama is nearer because so much demanding criticism awaits it. There are in America fine critical voices which will praise no play that is not dramatic, that is not rich and various, that does not wear a garment of implication of beauty and truth."

Miss Gale's produced plays:

"Miss Lulu Bett." Produced by Brock Pemberton. Belmont Theatre, New York, December 27, 1920.
"Mr. Pitt." Produced by Brock Pemberton. Thirty-ninth St. Theatre, New York, January 22, 1924.

JESSE LYNCH WILLIAMS

JESSE LYNCH WILLIAMS may claim such distinction as attaches to the honor of having won the first of the Pulitzer awards. In 1917 "Why Marry?" which previously had been called "And So They Were Married," was selected as the best American play of the year. As a prize-winning playwright, too, Mr. Williams held the honor for two years. The committee appointed to make a selection from the plays produced the following year, 1918, could not find a single play they deemed worthy of the award.

Mr. Williams has done a good bit of playwriting, but his output has not been consistently steady, and he

has turned back frequently to the short story and the novel. As a young man, having taken his college life seriously enough to earn an A.B. from Princeton in 1892, and an A.M. in 1895, he began his literary career by writing several college stories. These included "Princeton Stories" in 1895, and a "History of Princeton," written in collaboration with John DeWitt in 1898.

A year later, when he had had some newspaper experience, he also put that to good use in a volume of short bits of fiction beginning with "The Stolen Story." This was later dramatized and was considered, up to that time at least, the best newspaper play that had been staged. For some reason as yet unexplained the big public has little feeling for newspaper plays, and "The Stolen Story" was never a popular success.

After this stage experience Mr. Williams went back to book writing and brought forth "The Adventures of a Freshman," "New York Sketches" and "The Day Dreamer": also a new series of college stories, "The Girl and the Game," a personal impression of Grover Cleveland, and a novel, "The Married Life of the Frederick Carrolls."

He was president of the Authors' League in 1921, and this, bringing him close to Broadway again, inspired him to write a sort of companion play to "Why Marry?" which he called "Why Not?" As one discussed marriage from all known angles the other presented various aspects of the divorce problem from the viewpoint of a philosophical humorist.

Mr. Williams is another of those natives of the

middle west who has spent most of his life in the east. He was born in Sterling, Ill., in 1871. His two plays produced within the years covered by this volume were:

"Why Marry?" Produced by Selwyn & Co. Astor Theatre, New York, December 25, 1917.

"Why Not?" Produced by Equity Players. Forty-eighth St. Theatre, New York, December 29, 1922.

TWO POTENTIAL MEDALISTS

Being an arbitrary selection of two who are outstanding among the many who have been considered and are still considered by the editor likely condidates for the Pulitzer honor.

MAXWELL ANDERSON

LEAVING the Pulitzer prize winners to their glories we advance to that group of potential medalists who have given the greatest promise in recent seasons.

In this group I find two who stand out conspicuously: Maxwell Anderson and Philip Barry.

As playgoers we met Mr. Anderson first in 1923, when a drama of his called "White Desert" was produced by Brock Pemberton at the Comedy Theatre. We learned then that he was an editorial writer on the staff of the New York Morning World and we feared —those of us who have seen many newspaper playwrights come quickly into prominence and fade almost as quickly out again—that here was one more one-play man likely to become too quickly discouraged with failure and return embittered to Mr. Pulitzer's editorial conferences and what is known in newspaper dramas as the grind.

However discouraged Mr. Anderson may have been —(he has written that he was "much depressed over it, if you really want to know")—and whatever his state of mind, he did not give up the drama.

Laurence Stallings was working with Anderson on the World at the time, and had been greatly interested in the sale and production of "White Desert." Also, having had adventurous and tragic experiences in the war, and having acquired, as most of the young warriors of that day did acquire, a complete disgust of the shallow and trumpery war play of commerce,

Stallings was eager to write from out his own experiences and reactions and those of his fellow soldiers a real war drama. He confessed the desire to Anderson. They consulted together concerning such a play, its development and dramatic treatment, and finding themselves in accord they finished the play together.

That play was "What Price Glory?" It was produced by Arthur Hopkins in September, 1924, and so electrified theatrical New York that it definitely marks an epoch in the play producing history of the theatre capital. In addition to performing the great service of debunking the essentially untrue and no more than prettily patriotic war play, it served to crystallize a growing rebellion of young moderns who were protesting the conventional limitations of artificial stage dialogue. It tore down old puritan barriers that had for many generations stood as a protection against the use of any and all profanity on the stage. It established the license if not the rights of soldiers in stage trenches to talk as much like soldiers in real trenches as a liberal interpretation of what constitutes decency and good taste would permit.

We probably will have to wait a generation before we shall be able to approximate fairly the good that has resulted from this newer freedom of expression in the theatre. At the moment, as is the case with prohibition, the evidence is confusing. Playwrights and producers, following the Anderson-Stallings-Hopkins lead, have rent the air with familiar oaths and made a kind of blasphemy common. Whether it makes for a better as well as a stronger drama remains to be proved.

Before "What Price Glory?" there was, as noted, the drama "White Desert." Brock Pemberton had produced Pirandello's ironic comedy, "Six Characters in Search of an Author," Anderson had seen it and had been stirred to admiration for a producer with the courage to stage that play. It would require, he thought, something of the same courage to do his tragedy of the Dakota prairies in winter.

Pemberton, with a sympathetic interest in the progressive drama, was glad to produce "White Desert" and made a thoroughly fine job of it. But the story—the tragic recital of a moody and jealous husband who accuses his wife of infidelity and shoots her dead when she deliberately sins to be revenged upon him—was too heavy for popular consumption. The play won enthusiastic endorsement from the reviewers but not from the public.

At this beginning of his career, his friends have told me, Mr. Anderson thought that he, too, would like to try acting. He fancied he could see himself in certain rôles of his own creation. But later he decided that probably it would be well if he confined his activities to writing.

"White Desert" was tried in Stamford, Conn., where the first night audiences, a mixture of small town yokelry and suburban sophistication, can be wickedly unkind to a new play. The first scenes of the Anderson play as then written were comedy scenes and then suddenly, and without fair warning, they became tensely tragic. The audience, laughing gaily at the opening comedy, continued to laugh quite as gaily at the tragedy that followed, and it is related of Mr.

Anderson that, sitting at the edge of the crowd, he died several deaths as he saw his beautiful play completely misunderstood. The curtain was no sooner down than he set to work rewriting parts of the first act.

George Abbott, once an actor, then a playwright and now mostly a director, played the leading male rôle in "White Desert." He and Anderson worked together on a play they first called "The Feud." This was afterward generously revised and retitled "The Terror." John Golden produced it and Mr. Abbott played his own hero most creditably. But no one seemed to care much.

"What Price Glory?" was the outstanding success of the season following the production of "White Desert," and shortly after its definite establishment as a money earner Maxwell Anderson quit his editorial job. The realization of every writing man's ambition was his. Temporarily, at least, there was sufficient income to permit him to write what he wanted to write.

The next few months were devoted to the dramatization of Jim Tully's "Beggars of Life," made into a play called "Outside Looking In," and to further collaboration with Mr. Stallings.

Two plays they did in partnership, "First Flight," and "The Buccaneer," were bought and handsomely produced by Arthur Hopkins. But neither proved popular. The playwrights who had done so well with a realism they knew at first hand found themselves wavering uncertainly in the development of imaginative drama.

Name, and the fullness thereof.....Maxwell Anderson

Age, and the correctness thereof--shall we say approximately? 37

Birthplace and when escape therefrom was successfully accomplished, if ever.....
Atlantic, Pa — almost at once

Schooldays, and thence to what seat of learning?
Kill over Pennsylvania, Ohio, Iowa, North Dakota — U. of N. D — 1911

Early inclinations toward work, if any....

Early inclinations toward the drama, if any....

Early favorites of the stage.....

Your first play..White Desert

Your other plays...What Price Glory (in collaboration), Outside Looking In — Saturday's Children

Your first production..White Desert

Your first success and what did you think of it... Much depressed over it — if you really want to know

* Your present conclusions, in the light of all your experiences, as to the state of the drama, the theatre and, if you like, the state of Denmark.....

That it takes genius to write a play worth remembering and that no much genius happens to exist in this country

So much about your worktime routine, your ambitions, your working life, your playtime activities, your growing family and such other thoughts as you would like to see recorded in literature that shall be practically deathless

When a man starts peddling personal stuff about himself they should send a squad of strong-arm worms after him, because he's dead —

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* Including, and it please you, your opinion of dramatic critics and play reviewers in general, and those who get up books in particular.

The reticent Maxwell Anderson's own record of his achievements

"First Flight," is founded on an episode in the life of Andrew Jackson the time he was a red-headed youth (1788) and on his way to Nashville to straighten out the affairs of the free state of Franklin. He stops off at Peevey's tavern, in North Carolina, fights a duel or two, stirs the romantic attachment of 16-year-old Charity Clarkson and leaves her rather precipitously when he realizes that if he stays he will never again be able to read all ten of the commandments with a clear conscience.

"The Buccaneer" was likewise romantic and lightly historical. It told of a Captain Henry Morgan raiding party in southern waters, the time Morgan politely sacked the city of Panama and won the love of an English widow whose hacienda he had commandeered.

His enemies brought about the arrest of Captain Morgan, but they could not force King George to hang him. Instead His Majesty appointed the rascal governor of Jamaica and bade him take the beautiful Lady Elizabeth with him.

The Anderson adventure with "Outside Looking In" was likewise commercially unhappy. Being a drama of hobo life, twice as profane as "What Price Glory?" and much more verminous, it proved too rough to please the public.

The next Anderson play, "Saturday's Children," may, I think, be accepted as the most satisfying of his successes to date. It is distinctly his own and it represents in many ways the best he has to give the theatre. This play is human, is without affectation, plain spoken and true. It reveals a common problem faced by young married people when they try to prove that two can,

in fact, live as cheaply as one. These two manage to create for themselves a considerable amount of misery before they reach a reasonably happy understanding.

The Anderson background is in no sense theatrical. His father was a Baptist minister, the Rev. William Lincoln Anderson, with a pastorate in Atlantic, Pa., at the time of Maxwell's arrival. Later there were pastorates in other Pennsylvania towns, as well as a few in Ohio, Iowa and North Dakota. The son of the family acquired some part of his schooling in each of them.

He was 19 when the family finally settled in North Dakota and he went to the University of that state, graduating in 1911. He taught school his first two years out of college, was at one time on the faculty of Leland Stanford University and again that of Whittier College in Southern California.

Tiring of the academic life and having a natural writing gift, Mr. Anderson quit teaching and became an editorial writer on the San Francisco Bulletin. He made the change, he has said, because he needed more money than teaching jobs pay. Some time after this his employers decided that he was too outspoken and suggested that he better be looking around for another job. He went over to the San Francisco Chronicle. Happy or unhappy there, he did not stay long, but came east and became a contributor to the New Republic in New York. Later he tried newspaper work again, going to the New York Globe and later to the Morning World.

Like other newcomers among the playwrights, Mr. Anderson is opposed to talking about himself and, it is

easy to see, dislikes heartily being discussed in print. I wrote to ask him if he would not like to see recorded in this bit of practically deathless literature certain of his personal conclusions.

"When a man starts peddling personal stuff about himself," he wrote back, "they should send a squad of strong-arm worms after him, because he's dead."

Neither, I gather, is he overly enthusiastic concerning the drama, its past, present or probable future.

"I think it takes genius to write a play worth remembering," he said, "and that no such genius happens to exist in this country."

This attitude is not a pose with him. I say this on the word of his best friends. I asked one of his associates to tell me of his rehearsal manner. "He speaks in a banker's voice," was the reply, "and during the run of the play he never raised it once."

"Anderson is amazingly quick at writing dialogue on order," said another. "If a scene needed filling out he would sit down and write it while we waited. I never knew anyone who could write in character more easily."

An honest man and stimulating. The future of the theatre will owe a good deal to him, I believe. These are his produced plays to date:

"White Desert." Produced by Brock Pemberton. Princess Theatre, New York, Oct. 18, 1923.

"What Price Glory?" (with Laurence Stallings). Produced by Arthur Hopkins. Plymouth Theatre, New York, September 3, 1924.

"First Flight" (with Laurence Stallings). Produced by Arthur Hopkins. Plymouth Theatre, New Yory, September 17, 1925.

"The Buccaneer" (with Laurence Stallings). Produced by Arthur Hopkins. Plymouth Theatre, New York, October 2, 1925.

"Outside Looking In." Produced by Macgowan, Jones and O'Neill. Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, September 7, 1925.

"Saturday's Children." Produced by Actor's Theatre, Inc. Booth Theatre, New York, January 26, 1927.

"Gypsy." Produced by Richard Herndon, at the Klaw Theatre, New York, January 14, 1929.

PHILIP BARRY

To win a prize of any particular consequence with a first play should, I suppose, act as a handicap of sorts in the succeeding career of a dramatist.

At least I should not be startled out of a normal calm if I were to be reliably informed that prize winning playwrights, like prodigies and certain types of redheaded babies, seldom come to any good end. Any good end, that is, in keeping with their promised greatness.

If this be true, then we can accept Philip Barry as the exception necessary to prove a rule.

Interesting people, these exceptions. Mr. Barry's prize winning was done the second year he was studying with Professor Baker at Harvard. His play, "You and I," won him $500 and a New York production.

Richard Herndon gave the prize and made the production. "You and I" ran from February until the following June, and was later played with fair success on

tour. More importantly it quite successfully set young Barry on his feet. He has been doing nothing much but playwriting since, and his output has been consistently creditable, even when it has failed of box office success. There are people who would rather have written such Barry failures as "White Wings," "John" and "In a Garden" than a vast number of plays that have succeeded. Which, obviously, is getting at least half a chapter ahead of our story.

Mr. Barry is another of the younger men who, compared with the forerunners of their profession, seem slightly abnormal in their native reticences.

He is willing to admit, the record being what it is, that his name is Philip Barry and that he was born in Rochester, N. Y. 32 years ago. He will even go so far as to confide that he escaped from Rochester in 1913 and returned only occasionally thereafter to see his family, and never to stay for long at a time.

If you back Mr. Barry into a corner from which there is no apparent escape, shoot questions at him, followed by a smile intended to express the wistful hope that you will not have to employ violence, you are quite likely to come away supplied with many interesting facts. As for instance—

That he received his early education from priests and nuns, and his later education at Yale and Harvard. Which means that he was graduated from Yale in 1919 and promptly ran over to Harvard to study drama in Professor Baker's English 47 class—

That he likes to work—when he likes to work. And at such times as he feels the urge he works quite steadily—

That Maude Adams and Elsie Ferguson were the goddesses of his youth, and that even to this day any man who tries to say *that* against either of them may expect to come in for a perfectly terrible beating—

That he wrote his first play when he was 13: that it was a profound study of reincarnation: that it was called "No Thoroughfare," and that it had no Broadway success—

That he wrote his second play at the age of 20: that it was called "No Thoroughfare": that it was a profound study of psycho-analysis and had no Broadway success—

That his third play was in one-act: that it was entitled "Autonomy": that it was a bitter political satire and seemed to please the boys and girls who saw it given as a sort of curtain raiser to the Pump and Slipper dance in the ballroom of the Hotel Taft, New Haven, in 1919—

That his next play was a farce called "A Punch for Judy": that it was written in the 47th workshop ("against Professor Baker's better judgment,") and played by the Workshop company on a tour that took them as far west as Columbus, Ohio.

Which brings Mr. Barry to what may reasonably be spoken of as the outset of his career so far as the commercial theatre is concerned. He had been interested in the theatre, as the recital indicates, from the time he was 13. He worked hard to support that interest in a manner to which he hoped it might later become accustomed. One of his jobs was in the state department at Washington. Another was as a minor member of the staff at the United States Embassy in London.

The months between his first and second terms at Harvard he spent writing advertising copy. But he only wrote enough advertising copy to help him through the second term.

With the success of "You and I" he started seriously to make playwriting his career, thumbing his nose, I suspect, at all advertising signs and a few advertising men.

A half-finished piece called "The Youngest," which had been written as "Poor Richard" and had to lose its title because about the same time Louis Evan Shipman of "Life" wrote a Benj. Franklin play for which he quite naturally appropriated the "Poor Richard" name. This was while Mr. Herndon was trying to make up his mind and his budget preparatory to the production of the Barry piece. By the time he was ready to produce Barry's "Poor Richard" it was easier to change the title than fight for it.

Preliminary titles mean little, anyway. It was as "The Youngest" that the play came into the Gaiety Theatre, New York, under the direction of Robert Milton.

Speaking of his own reaction to his plays Barry has said—, " 'You and I' was a success and I liked it: 'The Youngest' was a moderate success and I did not like it."

Then there followed the familiar and usually helpful years of a playwright's chastening—the unsuccessful years. The next three Barry plays were, each and all, failures. "In a Garden" had the supreme advantage of an Arthur Hopkins production, the help of Laurette Taylor in the rôle of the heroine and a beautiful setting designed by Robert Edmund Jones. The play's

theme, too, would seem to be one attractive to women playgoers—i. e., that every married woman is at heart another man's mistress: that she always carries in her heart of hearts the image of the man who first awakened romance in her soul. But although a majority of its reviewers were kind, even when they were not quite understanding, the playgoers themselves were not pleased with "In a Garden" and refused to support it.

Hurt but not embittered young Mr. Barry devoted the next year to a fantastic comedy satire called "White Wings." Its speech was witty, its invention hilariously extravagant, its characters amusing. It told of the romance of Archie Inch and Mary Todd. The Inches for three generations had been street cleaners and excessively proud of their loyalty to that sanitary and necessary calling. The Todds were nobody but janitors. Yet in the play Mr. Todd invents a horseless carriage that eventually does away with horses and takes the Inches' occupation from them. This serves to break Archie's pride and brings him a beaten but still loving man to the feet of Mary Todd.

The attitude of the public was sharply divided as to the merits of "White Wings." Representatives of the intelligent minority were passionately militant, proving their interest by letters to the editors, by proclamations issued in society, by every means open to them save that apparently of buying tickets. The common majority metaphorically held its tilted noses and Winthrop Ames, who had produced the comedy beautifully, removed it to the storehouse the second week.

The rebound from this second defeat carried Mr.

Barry far. At least his next play was a Biblical drama relating the life of John the Baptist. Beautifully written, with a reverence that was honest rather than slavish, plus a sensitive and a fine sincerity that ennobled the work above its box office value, "John" also aroused the scoffers. The Actors' theatre made the production, casting Jacob Ben-Ami as the apostle from the mountains and providing an impressive setting. But the play lingered only two weeks, during which there were practically no signs of life at all at the ticket windows.

With three failures behind him it is probable the Barry outlook upon life at this juncture was not at all cheerful nor his optimism at all stimulating. But he turned the corner a few weeks later with the success of "Paris Bound," a smart discussion of adultery and the unfair importance attaching to it in any marriage that is truly a spiritual sacrament.

"Paris Bound," I have no doubt, is also one of the Barry plays that the author likes the least, seeing "White Wings" and "John" are his most truly begotten favorites.

Two weeks after the "Paris Bound" success a mystery play called "Cock Robin," in the writing of which Barry collaborated with Elmer Rice, was produced. It is, as mystery plays go, diverting and skillfully patterned. Otherwise it is the least significant of any play of his output.

We return now to the playwright himself, whom we left standing in the corner plainly ill at ease. And by taking up our questioning where we left off we learn, further—

That Mr. Barry thinks the theatre is in a terrible state and always has been: that the same can be said for the drama—

That he has no definite worktime schedule: that his playtime is devoted mostly to walking briskly, swimming feebly and talking to anyone who will listen to him—

That his family consists of a wife, two sons and a dog, all of whom and which he likes very much—

That he thinks dramatic critics do not know very much about the theatre, nor playwrights either—

And that he finds it easier to write the plays he enjoys writing most in Cannes, France.

It might be added that this editor has unbounded faith that this playwright will yet write his name large in the American theatre. Which prophecy means little because, as a matter of fact, he has done that already.

Mr. Barry's produced plays are:

"You and I." Produced by Richard Herndon. Belmont Theatre, New York, February 19, 1923.

"The Youngest." Produced by Robert Milton. Gaiety Theatre, New York, December 22, 1924.

"In a Garden." Produced by Arthur Hopkins. Plymouth Theatre, New York, November 16, 1925.

"White Wings." Produced by Winthrop Ames. Booth Theatre, New York, October 15, 1926.

"John." Produced by Actors' Theatre Inc. Klaw Theatre, New York, November 4, 1927.

"Paris Bound." Produced by Arthur Hopkins. Music Hall, New York, December 27, 1927.

"Cock Robin." Produced by Guthrie McClintic. Forty-eighth St. Theatre, New York, January 12, 1928.

THE YOUNG COLLABORATORS—

Being a chapter devoted to certain important contributors to the recent theatre who have from choice worked their way upward one and one and collected the rewards two and two.

GEORGE ABBOTT

BEFORE we leave the theatre of most recent memory and start a tour of the theatre of the near past, and possibly the more distant theatre of fading glories and fond reminiscence, I shall devote a chapter to certain other comparatively youthful contemporaries (their ages being judged in terms of their theatre years) who have played a prominent part in keeping the stage busy these last few seasons.

Busy with *shows* be it admitted. Busy with what is known as "good theatre." They are very lightly interested, and they would be the first to confess it, in the deeper significance of the drama's trend or the philosophic content of the theatre's output. But they are playing an interesting and important part in the current development of the theatre.

Leading this group is George Francis Abbott. (He dropped the Francis when he was 6, he tells me, because he became convinced from certain things certain kids said that it was a girl's name, even if it had belonged to his grandfather).

Mr. Abbott has done so well the last few seasons specializing in the direction of the plays on which he has collaborated that to mention his name in any group of theatre followers to-day is to have most of them catalogue him automatically as a play director, rather than as a playwright. But the facts prove that he started out rather deliberately to be a playwright and

made a fairly good job of it, even though he has not yet produced a play exclusively his own.

He has worked on, helped write, rewritten, changed, conditioned, suggested, and staged plays with James Gleason, Winchell Smith, John V. A. Weaver, Maxwell Anderson, Frank Craven, Paul Dickey, Philip Dunning, Ann Bridgers and Dana Burnet. Not to mention all the producers of all these playwrights who sat around at rehearsals and conferences and made things difficult.

In some instances I suspect he did most of the work, and in others the material was probably pretty well shaped before he took it over. But you will find, I am also convinced, a very definite something that is George Abbott in each of these plays, because that is the sort of person he is, and that is the kind of talent which is his particular gift.

Geographically Abbott belongs to both the East and the West. The family lived in the little town of Salamanca, N. Y., in the near neighborhood of 40 years ago. Salamanca is generally given as his birthplace. As a matter of truth he was born in the neighboring village of Forestville while his mother was visiting there and George refused to delay his arrival until she could get home.

He was no more than 7 when his father became a government land agent in Wyoming and took George along with him to Cheyenne. When he was big enough they sent him to the military academy at Kearney, Neb., and when the family moved east again he went to high school in Hamburg, N. Y., and from there to the University of Rochester.

The playwriting urge began to trouble George during his sophomore year in college, but he could not induce the dramatic clubs to produce his plays. Not until his senior year. After that they tried several. He was the happy author of the senior farce his graduation year, which was 1911.

The next year he, too, studied with Prof. Baker in Harvard, and did well enough as a student of English 47 to have one of his plays produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club. Another, called "The Man in the Manhole," won a prize and was played in one of the Keith theatres in Boston.

With this encouragement back of him George packed a small grip with such long plays as he had put together and came to New York to sell them. He was not particularly surprised that none of the producing managers met him at the station, considering the uncertainty of trains and things like that, but it did irk him a little when none of them seemed eager to talk with him when he called.

To fool them he stopped calling and took a job as an actor. He learned a lot both about life and the stage during his acting years but there were eight of them added against him before he was rid of them and back at playwriting.

During an engagement in a touring company playing "Dulcy," which was the first comedy George Kaufman and Marc Connelly wrote, Abbott met James Gleason, who also had playwriting ambitions. Together they wrote "The Fall Guy," and when this comedy was produced in March, 1925, it helped to put one Abbott foot, which is of generous size and solid enough to sup-

port the six feet of bulk that towers above it, on one of the lower rungs of the Broadway ladder. He followed it promptly with the other foot and he has never taken either off the ladder except to climb a rung higher.

His acting years were also productive in another way. By 1923 he had acquired stature as a leading man in plays demanding the healthier he-men types. He enjoyed personal successes in "Zander the Great," with Alice Brady, in Maxwell Anderson's "White Desert" and Hatcher Hughes' prize-winning "Hell-bent fer Heaven." They tried to make a sort of star of him in "Lazybones," but it did not take. He played prominently in "Processional," and his last try was in "The Terror," which he and Winchell Smith made over from its Maxwell Anderson-George Abbott beginnings.

During this time he was working nearer and nearer to the thing he really wanted to do. John V. A. Weaver had asked him to help fix up a comedy called "Love 'Em and Leave 'Em." Jed Harris bought and produced it, and that started the Harris-Abbott association. While he was with Dulcy a young actress from the south named Ann Bridgers, understudying the women's parts, had asked him to work with her on a short play. Later they wrote a long one and called it "Norma." When it was finished they took it to Mr. Harris, who bought it, suggested "Coquette" as a better title, held it a year for Helen Hayes and scored a season's run with it in New York and later a success on tour.

During the wait for Miss Hayes, Mr. Harris turned the script of Philip Dunning's "Broadway" over to Mr. Abbott. Working in sympathy with Mr. Dunning, who

is also an author and stage director, he helped make "Broadway" the melodramatic success of that particular year.

This galloping young director has not turned everything he has touched into a success, but his average would be fairly startling if in two seasons he had done no more than stage "Broadway," "Chicago" and "Coquette."

He could not do much with "Spread Eagle," nor with "Four Walls," which he helped Dana Burnet to write, and "The Terror" was a quick failure. But still, as I say, his record has not often been equalled on Broadway.

Abbot is a modest enthusiast and believes sincerely in the modern theatre. He belongs to the group that figuratively took to throwing its caps in the air when the "debunking" processes that have stripped the drama of much of its cheaper artifice the last few seasons set in.

A clean minded, clean-living type himself, he will fight long and hard for the honesty and freedom of a scene that to him demands a touch of profanity to give it character. Either cut the scene or play it right is his rule. Either eliminate the character or give it every chance for honest development and expression. His enthusiasm may lead him astray at times, but in the end his sound common sense and native good taste will save him.

Abbott believes that the drama has changed greatly the last few years: that for the first time the play has become more important than the actors who play it. He believes in dramatic critics because he says though

they can be awfully wrong he has found them generally right and he feels that they are largely responsible for building up and sustaining the interest of the playgoing public in the theatre.

Few are as generously equipped in the matter of a working knowledge of the theatre as this busy collaborateur. The theatre will hear much of him and his work the next few years.

Mr. Abbott's produced plays include:

"The Fall Guy" (with James Gleason). Produced by Messrs. Shubert in association with George B. McClellan. Eltinge Theatre, New York, March 10, 1925.

"A Holy Terror" (with Winchell Smith). Produced by John Golden. George M. Cohan Theatre, New York, September 28, 1925.

"Love 'Em and Leave 'Em" (with John V. A. Weaver). Produced by Jed Harris. Sam H. Harris Theatre, New York, February 3, 1926.

"Broadway" (with Philip Dunning). Produced by Jed Harris. Broadhurst Theatre, New York, September 16, 1926.

"Four Walls" (with Dana Burnett). Produced by John Golden. John Golden Theatre, New York, September 19, 1927.

"Coquette" (with Ann Bridgers). Produced by Jed Harris. Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, November 8, 1927.

GEORGE S. KAUFMAN

SECOND to Mr. Abbot in the matter of output as a collaborateur is George S. Kaufman who started with Marc Connelly as a playwriting partner in 1921 and

has been consistently active each season since then.

Some fifteen plays of varied type owe their origin or a part of their content to Mr. Kaufman, and as these have all been written and produced within the last seven seasons, (eighty per cent of them with notable success) it constitutes a sizable record. Particularly for a young man who has continued to hold during that time his regular job as dramatic editor of the New York Times.

Mr. Kaufman frankly admits that he prefers collaborative writing to working alone. He suspects that this is due to the fact that most of his playwriting has been done under those conditions. Being used to company he is lonesome without it.

His associate workers, however, are not as numerous as Mr. Abbott's. There are but five all told and two of these belong to a rapidly receding past. With Irving Pichel he once wrote a play called "The Failure," and with the late Larry Evans another called "Someone in the House." The Pichel play never reached production and the other was numbered also with the failures.

His real work started with Mr. Connelly when together they fashioned a comedy around the character of the bromidic Dulcinea familiar to the readers of Franklin P. Adams' newspaper column. "Dulcy" was a fair success in New York, but proved a little mystifying to audiences in the back country.

It gave the Kaufman-Connelly duo a Broadway foothold, however, and they took advantage of it with enthusiasm. Nor were they discouraged by the fact that their enthusiasm was a much stronger factor in

their lives, at this time, than their royalty checks. They were having a lot of fun.

In "To the Ladies" they pilloried rotarian salesmen and the professional banqueteers with a smile. When they discovered the world so full of rotarian salesmen and professional banqueteers (who did not think their play the least bit funny) that they could not sell their play they kept on smiling.

But now they turned showmen with some deliberation. From Harry Leon Wilson's story they fashioned a "Merton of the Movies" comedy, Hugh Ford staged it and it earned a popular success for them. It gave them, I understand, severe artistic pains but it fattened their bank accounts.

Lest a recital of their following activities sound too much like a Broadway catalogue of failures and successes we will pass it quickly by. They failed with "The Deep Tangled Wildwood," which sought to expose New York's sophistication as something the back country copies even more quickly than it does the Broadway styles.

They wrote the book of a musical play cleverly titled "Helen of Troy, N. Y." And then they definitely took their second step up by adapting a German book to fit an American story and called it "Beggar on Horseback." The suggestion and production were provided by Winthrop Ames, and both were of vast help to the young playwrights. Artistically and commercially it proved their biggest success and with its production they temporarily parted company.

Mr. Kaufman turned first to helping Edna Ferber with a dramatization of her short story, "Old Man

Minick." It reached the stage as plain "Minick" and lingered through a season. Then he wrote his first play alone, the popular "Butter and Egg Man," in which the late Gregory Kelly represented an innocent from the West come to invest his money in Broadway show business. The sharpers take him in but before the evening is over he is happily out again.

From this season on Mr. Kaufman's services have been in constant demand. Within the last three years he has written the book for "The Cocoanuts," which was a huge success, and failed with a satirical fling at patriotic buncombe called "Strike up the Band." He helped Herman Mankiewicz write "The Good Fellow," which made fun of the joiners of secret societies and offended so many more of them than it amused that it did not last long, and he succeeded magnificently with "The Royal Family," in the writing of which he again worked with Miss Ferber.

This story of an American actor family that remains true to type and tradition through four generations has been generously and, I think, a bit unfairly broadcasted as a report of the home life of the Drews and Barrymores. The authors are free to admit that had there been no Barrymores the suggestion prompting their writing of the play might never have occurred to them. But that they have copied either actual incident or rumored happenings directly from the lives of the Barymores they deny emphatically.

Mr. Kaufman is a Pennsylvanian, born in Pittsburg. Out of high school he devoted a few months to studying law and gave it up, he says, because he found it too hard. He floated about after that, worked first as a

chainman and later as a transit man on a surveying corps: was a window clerk in the Allegheny county tax office, and finally took up stenography seriously. He was, as he remembers it, a good stenographer but a bad travelling salesman, which he also tried.

He was 19 when he left Pittsburg and came to New York. Here he became a volunteer contributor to the F. P. A. column, at that time running in the Evening Mail. Through Adams he later acquired a column of his own in Mr. Munsey's Washington paper. Many subscribers thought it a funny column but Mr. Munsey, whose sense of humor was what it was, was not so sure. So George came back to New York. When Mr. Adams went over to the New York Tribune Kaufman was one of those who tried out as his successor on the Mail. His success was moderate, but he found little satisfaction in it and drifted into theatre news reporting on the Times.

At this point the editor of this volume enters in person and in the reminiscent flesh. Henry R. Stern of the Joseph W. Stern Music company about this time conceived the organization of a new kind of play brokerage. It was his scheme to hunt out and assist to success amateur playwrights of talent who would pay an extra 10 per cent of their royalties over a given period for such help as they might be given.

I was selected as the chief playreader of the organization and asked to give Mr. Stern a list of any young writers I thought were possessed of a promising talent. In this list I included the name of George Kaufman. Mr. Stern wrote him and a few days later the young

man approached Mr. Stern with the manuscript of a check-raising farce called "Going Up."

We read it, liked it, suggested numerous changes which may have been good and may have been terrible and Mr. Stern started the play on the rounds of the producing managers looking for a buyer. The title, as I remember it, had been appropriated by Frank Craven for a musical version of "Too Many Cooks," so that was discarded. But the farce we still thought was quite wonderful.

It did not sell. But among those who read it with favor was John Peter Toohey, at that time an associate of George C. Tyler, the producer. Mr. Toohey in his enthusiasm called Mr. Tyler's attention to the snappiness of Mr. Kaufman's dialogue and his excellent sense of comedy situations. Mr. Tyler, being convinced, sent for Mr. Kaufman and from that meeting came the writing and production of "Dulcy," which served as Mr. Kaufman's introduction to Broadway, fame and a growing fortune.

The play brokerage failed to uncover any long-felt need of its services but it is still pointing with reminiscent pride to the fact that Mr. Kaufman and Arthur Richman were at one time numbered among its clients.

Mr. Kaufman has added to his activities in the theatre. He assisted in the staging of "The Royal Family" and assumed full charge as director of "The Front Page." Inasmuch as his direction is credited with being responsible for a large part of that play's success he may be said to have successfully added another accomplishment to his list.

He is a mild-mannered and fairly taciturn individual. His interest in playwriting is seemingly merely casual and he has not so far permitted it to interfere with his newspaper job. His opinion of the drama in general is that its condition has never before been so good.

"You have to work harder to get a hit," he says, speaking as a playwright, "but there is no limit to what you can do in the way of hewing to the line. There are no longer any rules of the kind they used to put into playwriting books. Make up your own so long as you're entertaining. Commercially speaking box-office prices are higher than ever before, and there is now more money in the theatre than in the movies."

MARC CONNELLY

In addition to his work with Mr. Kaufman, Mr. Connelly also achieved a production shortly after the breaking up of the partnership. This was of a play called "The Wisdom Tooth," a whimsical comedy which bore out the belief of those who had observed the diverging tastes of the young men that Mr. Connelly is more interested in sentimental and serious dramatic themes than Mr. Kaufman.

"The Wisdom Tooth" found a limited public in New York that was frankly enthusiastic about it. Using an adaptation of the dream-play form it tells of a spiritually beaten clerk in a big city corporation brought to a helpful realization of his weaknesses by being returned

in a vision to the days of his youth. There he meets the boy he used to be before he became a carbon copy of all other beaten New Yorkers, and he is inspired by the contact to renew his belief in himself.

Mr. Connelly next collaborated with Herman Mankiewicz in the writing of "The Wild Man of Borneo," an extravagant comedy that failed of success. He has of recent months devoted himself to moving picture scenarios and given aid to certain musical and dramatic comedies that stood greatly in need of it.

He, too, is a Pennsylvanian, having been born in McKeesport in 1891. He left the public schools for Trinity Hall, Washington, Pa., and when he was through there went to work as a newspaper man in Pittsburg. He was a reporter, wrote some play reviews and did a column of humorous paragraphs and bits of verse.

This led naturally to his trying his hand at writing lyrics for a musical comedy. These he sold and when the play was done in New York he came on from Pittsburg to be in at the triumph. The play failed and Mr. Connelly, being without the return fare, decided that he wanted to stay in New York anyway. That was in 1915 and he has done a lot of things since—newspaper work, magazine writing, sketch writing and play doctoring. His meeting with Mr. Kaufman was the first step toward such definite encouragement as he has since enjoyed.

That meeting, incidentally, and the happy accident by which it became so notable a collaboration, is a matter of friendly dispute between the two.

"This special event took place at the opening of Mr. Dillingham's 'She's a Good Fellow' at the Globe The-

atre," Mr. Kaufman has recorded in his still unpublished memoirs.

"Marc was the most distinguished person in the audience. By laughing at the Duncan sisters louder than anyone else he unquestionably distinguished himself. At that time he had been co-author of a musical comedy called 'The Amber Empress,' of another one named 'Follow the Girl' and of a third whose title I cannot recall. The total run of these operas if laid end to end would reach exactly to Cain's storehouse—and did.

"Anyhow, Marc came up to our house for dinner one evening and various and sundry plays came under discussion. A little later one night when he was having dinner at our house we agreed that writing plays was not particularly difficult. About a week after that it happened that Marc was up at our house for dinner and we decided to write a play together. At a dinner at our house a few weeks later, when Marc chanced to be present, we made up our minds to go ahead with it. Just at present we are kept from writing another one because Marc is having a little indigestion."

"I first met Kaufman in Shanghai in 1900," Mr. Connelly has written in a brochure, if one should care to call it that, entitled "Kaufman Through Friendly Eyes."

" 'Man, you're freezing,' I told him, as he held out a battered tin cup for alms.

" 'I guess you're right, pardner,' he tremblingly admitted. 'I haven't had a bite for several days.'

"I dragged him, more dead than alive, into a nearby club. That was the start of our acquaintance. The

Encyclopedia Britannica account of our having met first at a house party in Gad's Hill is quite false.

"Little remains to be told. Kaufman's long struggle to learn English after his long stay in Polynesia, our silly quarrel over the price of a carpet for the Savoy, the early days on Fourteenth Street—all have been recounted by better pens than mine.

"I can add this much, however. The poor miner to whom I tossed a nugget at Nome one day in the 90s has blossomed into a man among men. More like a pal than a playwright! I don't see how he does it—I mean I can't figure out how he writes the excellent plays he has been turning out."

In recapitulation we find the combined output of these workers to include the following plays produced:

"Dulcy" (Kaufman and Connelly). Produced by George C. Tyler and H. H. Frazee. Frazee Theatre, New York, August 13, 1921.

"To the Ladies" (Kaufman and Connelly). Produced by George C. Tyler and A. L. Erlanger. Liberty Theatre, New York, February 20, 1922.

"Merton of the Movies" (Kaufman and Connelly). Produced by George C. Tyler and Hugh Ford. Cort Theatre, New York, November 13, 1922.

"Helen of Troy, N. Y." (Book by Kaufman and Connelly). Produced by Rufus LeMaire and George Jessel. Selwyn Theatre, New York, June 19, 1923.

"The Deep Tangled Wildwood" (Kaufman and Connelly). Produced by George C. Tyler and Hugh Ford. Frazee Theatre, New York, November 5, 1923.

"Beggar on Horseback" (Kaufman and Connelly). Produced

by Winthrop Ames. Broadhurst Theatre, New York, February 12, 1924.

"Be Yourself" (Book by Kaufman and Connelly). Produced by Wilmer and Vincent. Sam H. Harris Theatre, New York, September 3, 1924.

"Minick" (Edna Ferber and George Kaufman). Produced by Winthrop Ames, Booth Theatre, New York, September 24, 1924.

"The Butter and Egg Man" (George S. Kaufman). Produced by Crosby Gaige. Longacre Theatre, New York, September 25, 1925.

"The Cocoanuts" (Book by George S. Kaufman). Produced by Sam H. Harris. Lyric Theatre, New York, December 8, 1925.

"The Good Fellow" (Kaufman and Manckiewicz). Produced by Crosby Gaige. Playhouse, New York, October 5, 1926.

"The Royal Family" (Kaufman and Ferber). Produced by Jed Harris. Selwyn Theatre, New York, December 28, 1928.

By Mr. Connelly:

"The Wisdom Tooth." Produced by John Golden. Little Theatre, New York, February 15, 1926.

"The Wild Man of Borneo." Produced by Philip Goodman. Bijou Theatre, New York, September 13, 1927.

DRAMATISTS AND MELODRAMATISTS—

Being a small group of those playwrights who belong both to the reasonably recent past and the active present whose plays have won them places of distinction in the native theatre.

CHANNING POLLOCK

HAVING accounted for the Pulitzer prize winners and for those contemporary playwrights following most closely upon their heels, I am conscious of dozens of other worthy and modestly distinguished candidates crowding in to demand their priority rights of standing.

It is impossible for me to attempt to list them, as the saying is, in the order of their merit. Nor can I gracefully fall back upon the safer compromise of cataloguing them in alphabetical order. So, with that much of an explanation I have decided to give them place in the order in which their most recent activities in the theatre have brought them prominently to mind. I begin with Channing Pollock. Many discussions of playwrights do begin with Channing Pollock.

Mr. Pollock has devoted the better part of twenty-eight of the forty-eight years of his life to playwriting. During that time I have observed him as he has passed through three successive phases of drama creation. He has always taken his job seriously and in many respects he is one who may serve as a model of persistence and a credit to his ambitions.

He began when he was 20, which was in 1900. He had been a critic of the drama in Washington. He had become a press agent for William A. Brady, and Mr. Brady offered to pay him $50 a week above his press agent's salary for the job of making a drama out

of Frank Norris's then popular novel of the wheat market called "The Pit." This play is said to have made something like a half million dollars for Mr. Brady. It netted Mr. Pollock $2,000, assuming that he did his own typing. The division of profits may sound unfair, but was not when all the circumstances are taken into consideration.

For some years immediately following the production of "The Pit" Mr. Pollock continued to write plays during such time as he was not busy helping to make Grace George and other of the Brady enterprises known to a bigger and more responsive playgoing public. He wrote in hotel rooms, on Pullman cars and during vacations, and his output included such remembered plays as a dramatization of "In a Bishop's Carriage," "The Little Gray Lady," a drama of government clerk life in Washington: and "Clothes," written in collaboration with the late Avery Hopgood and which stands as the starting point of that playwright's successful career.

In 1906 Mr. Pollock told the Messers Shubert, whose press work he had been doing for the two years previous to that time, that he was retiring from publicity work to become a regular dramatist. Thereafter he devoted himself exclusively to authorship. He had some success, but not much, with a dramatization of "The Secret Orchard" and more with an original play, "Such a Little Queen," which brought Elsie Ferguson to notice. This was not, however, the sort of play he wanted to write. He thereupon took to musical comedy, hoping to achieve financial independence within the year and indulge himself thereafter in the luxury of

writing what he wanted to write and thumbing his nose at any producers who did not like it.

In his musical comedy, or second, period he worked mostly with the late Rennold Wolf. Together they turned out "The Red Widow," "My Best Girl," "The Beauty Shop" one or two libretto frameworks on which to hang Ziegfeld "Follies." These all made money, and with his share of it in the bank Mr. Pollock went back to the drama.

"Roads of Destiny," "The Crowded Hour" (with Edgar Selwyn) and finally "The Sign on the Door" came from his apartment studio the next few seasons. The last named play proved the lucky turn. It achieved popular success both in America and in Europe. And now, though he was tempted away long enough to do another "Follies" in 1921, or as much of a book as Mr. Ziegfeld's scenery and girls permitted, Mr. Pollock turned to the third phase of his playwriting career which represents him as a crusader in the interest of the moral and purposeful drama.

First he wrote "The Fool." In this drama he pictures the difficulties and minor tragedies besetting the way of a young clergyman who strives seriously to emulate his master and live as Christ might live in the world to-day.

The play, scoffed at by many of its reviewers, achieved popular success only after Mr. Pollock personally had mounted the community soap boxes and brought it directly to the attention of the public for which he had written it.

His next try was with "The Enemy," in which he brought forward from the experiences of the late war

the lesson that hate is the common enemy of mankind—hate and greed and ignorance. Without hate, he insisted, there would be no war, and the sooner nations learn to know it the sooner will definite progress toward a real millenium have been made.

In this particular preachment, this variation upon a familiar editorial theme, the playwright sets his scene in Vienna before the war. He employs the war to separate and embitter English and Austrian student friends, and to crush, humiliate and impoverish the family of an Austrian university professor whose daughter, married to a soldier, stands finally in the window of her home, looks down upon the columns of fighting men starting for the front and defiantly thanks God that her undernourished male child has died and is therefore safe from conscription as cannon fodder for some future conflict.

"The Enemy," coming, I feel, a little too soon after the war, and after all the homiletic editorializing that followed in its wake, to inspire a new interest in any plea for a saner pacifism, suffered, like "The Fool," more from the faint praise of disinterested reviewers than it gained from an occasional burst of superlatives spoken in its praise and defense. Mr. Pollock again tried to arouse non-theatregoers by an intensive and personally conducted advertising campaign, but his success this time was only moderate.

He rested a year, spent several months in Europe, and then returned to the fight with "Mr. Moneypenny." Here again he improvises upon a familiar theme—this time the Biblical warning that it shall

profit a man but little even to gain the whole world if the venture cost him his soul.

Again his critics were divided sharply for and against him. Lay critics of the drama, men of the standing of William Lyon Phelps, Nicholas Murray Butler, and John Haynes Holmes wrote in high praise of the play. Half the professional reviewers of the press gave him credit for a worthy achievement, the other half were either weakly non-committal or intolerantly and unfairly contemptuous.

There was, however, a measure of agreement that "Mr. Moneypenny," written as a Broadway allegory, had been pieced together with consistent skill and scored many points as a scathing satire of an age that is distressingly jazzed and generously hell-bent.

In "Mr. Moneypenny" Mr. Pollock uses the formula Goethe employed in "Faust." John Jones is a poverty-stricken and embittered salary slave. The Devil is "Mr. Moneypenny," the Crœsus who owns the money vaults in which Jones has toiled for twenty unproductive years.

A bargain is struck between the two by the terms of which Moneypenny agrees to give Jones all that his hungry heart desires in the way of such happiness as money can buy in exchange for Jones' complete and exclusive devotion to Moneypenny's moral standards.

In a succession of fantastic scenes Jones is made president of a sort of stock brokerage mint, the possessor of a gold-leaf home, the host at a blah-blah dinner at which a succession of blah-blah celebrities speak their acquired language of blah, host again

at a loud and liquorish night club and finally a patient in a hospital from which he escapes to his modest suburban home and there finds happiness and peace of mind as a poor, plain but honest citizen.

In the biographical records, Mr. Pollock was born in Washington, D. C., in 1880, and a few months later started upon a parentally conducted tour of the world that took in many countries. He attended public schools in Omaha, Neb., and Salt Lake City, Utah, and later added something to what he had learned by school and tutoring experiences in what is now Czechoslovakia, Austria, San Salvador, and Central America. He finally wound up at the Bethel Military Academy in Virginia, which happens to be his mother's (Verona Larkin Pollock's) native state.

In 1898 he was back in Washington, having turned newspaper man and acquired the job and title that goes with the assistant dramatic editorship of the Washington Post. It was after some objection had been made to the freedom and severity of his criticisms that he decided to quit journalism and become a practical showman.

He is a hard worker. "I have always hated work and done more of it than almost any other man I know," he wrote me when I asked him for a writing man's view of himself. "Every bit of work I have done in my life, except for a few days in which I was confronted by starvation—has been literary work. I have written everything but home for money. . . . When I was 19 I had written a novel, a book of short stories and fourteen plays—all of which, except thirteen of the plays, have been published or produced. . . . I

write every day from 7 a. m. to 1 p. m. and as much longer as I feel like writing. I am the slowest workman in captivity. An idea may be anywhere from five to twenty years germinating in my mind, and from one to three years flowering. The actual writing takes about three months. My only ambition is to write fine plays of a sort that shall do some good in the world. The latter half of this ambition, I admit, is comic, but I can't help it. My playtime activities consist in walking an hour every day in winter, and swimming an hour every day in summer. For the rest, I enjoy going to the theatre, and I enjoy reading. As to my growing family, it believes in me more than anybody else ever could."

Mr. Pollock's produced plays during the last eight years have included:

"The Sign on the Door." Produced by A. H. Woods. Republic Theatre, New York, December 19, 1919.
"The Fool." Produced by The Selwyns. Times Square Theatre, New York, October 23, 1922.
"The Enemy." Produced by Crosby Gaige. Times Square Theatre, New York, October 20, 1925.
"Mr. Moneypenny." Produced by Channing Pollock, Inc. Liberty Theatre, New York, October 17, 1928.

BAYARD VEILLER

BAYARD VEILLER is a journeyman playwright. As it happens Bayard Veiller is also an extraordinarily successful playwright at the moment. But to the gossips

of the theatre, professional and lay, he will always be the unlucky young man who missed a fortune with a drama called "Within the Law."

The romance of the theatre is at its fascinating best when it combines the story of the obscure genius raised suddenly from store clothes to top hats, with the equally familiar story of those astute producers of plays who were fooled by a manuscript.

"Within the Law" was refused by practically every play producer in Broadway eighteen years ago, and—

But before we get to that portion of the record let us survey the Veiller approach.

He was born in Brooklyn a matter of fifty-seven years ago. His parents were honored citizens enjoying such contentment as usually comes to simple home folk. They were also patient folk, explaining to Bayard from time to time that he might call himself anything he jolly well liked, but that his name was Veiller —pronounced Vay-yay—because his paternal grandfather was French and proud of it. Mr. Veiller, after a few ineffective protests based upon his experiences at school, decided to pronounce Veiller as Vay-yay and has spent the last fifty years of his life explaining to certain persons why. A great many of them cannot understand it to this day, though they all realize that when they speak to him as Veeler an ominous light appears in his eyes.

After school Mr. Veiller became a newspaper man of sorts. Then, as so often happens, convinced that he was worth much more money than his editors would pay him, he quit journalism for press agentry. He trouped with the shows, married an actress,

(Margaret Wycherley), and began writing plays on his own account.

One of these was a dramatization of Robert Chambers' at that time popular serial, "The Common Law," made for A. H. Woods, who objected, quaintly enough, to its bedroom scenes.

Another was a piece he first called "The Miracle," later "The Case of Mary Turner" and finally "Within the Law." A third reached production many years afterward as "The Fight."

Veiller liked the Mary Turner play much the best of all his work and tried hardest to sell it. When the Selwyn brothers, a firm of playbrokers at that time, could not dispose of it to any of the managers of standing they finally induced one of those new firms that annually blossom and fade on Broadway to risk a production, retaining for themselves a quarter interest. But the new firm (Dreyfus & Fellner) quickly lost its bank balance with a musical comedy called "The Three Romeos" and "Within the Law" was returned to its pigeonhole.

It is a long story after that. Cut to essential facts Veiller, who was eager to quit being a press agent and devote himself to playwriting, finally agreed to sell to the Selwyns the rights and royalties to all three of his finished plays for the equivalent of a salary of $75 a week for fifty weeks, or $3,750.

The stock rights to the plays, the Selwyns knew, were or should prove to be, worth more than that, and they pointed this out to Mr. Veiller. But the playwright was eager to make the bargain that he might get to work on other and better plays that were then seething

in his mind. The deal was made and the plays delivered.

At the time William A. Brady was, as usual, looking for a play for his wife, Grace George, and thought "Within the Law" might do. He insisted, however, that George Broadhurst rewrite and point up the manuscript, which Mr. Broadhurst did. Miss George, however, later decided that she did not like the thought of playing a heroine who was a thief and quit the play in rehearsal. Emily Stevens was substituted and "Within the Law" produced in Chicago.

It was played there for four weeks, without achieving a popular success. Mr. Brady was discouraged. When Archibald Selwyn offered to buy what producers speak of as a "slice" of the production Mr. Brady suggested that he take the whole thing for $10,000, which would no more than cover what he had spent on it.

Selwyn bought and immediately sold interests to his brother Edgar, Elizabeth Marbury and Roi Cooper Megrue. Lee Shubert, who had been interested with Brady, also resubscribed for a quarter interest and when the play was brought to New York A. H. Woods, who wanted it for his Eltinge Theatre, just finished, agreed to make "Within the Law" his opening attraction if its owners would also sell him a quarter interest.

Its finances became so complicated and the restaging of the play so expensive that Mr. Megrue and Miss Marbury decided to withdraw, selling their interests to the Selwyns. When "Within the Law" was finally ready for its New York hearing, therefore, with a comparatively new leading woman named Jane Cowl given the chief rôle, the Selwyns owned half of it, Woods and

Lee Shubert a quarter each, and the royalties, because of Veiller's assignment of rights, were to be divided between the Selwyns and Mr. Broadhurst—even though, as the story now goes, most of what Mr. Broadhurst had done to the play had been discarded and the original Veiller script restored.

"Within the Law" ran for over a year at the Eltinge Theatre, paying for that rather costly playhouse with the profits it returned Mr. Woods and making its other owners extremely happy. Much happier, as one can readily believe, than it made Mr. Veiller.

He, however, was taken care of. The Selwyns, following the success of the play, voluntarily agreed to pay Mr. Veiller $100 a week during the New York run and $50 a week for each road company that should be sent touring. As there were eight of these at one time Mr. Veiller's spirits in time brightened perceptibly, although he is not one to respond at all violently to the emotion of cheerfulness. The Selwyns also gave him back his play called "The Fight." When produced "The Fight" proved a failure. So did another play he wrote a season or so later with Irvin Cobb as collaborator. "Back Home" they called it. Veiller did not, in fact, strike success again until 1916 when the late William Harris produced his "The Thirteenth Chair."

This melodrama, the first and still one of the best of mystery thrillers, while never the steady and consistent success "Within the Law" proved to be, did do wonderfully well for all concerned with it. And then Mr. Veiller again faded from the Broadway scene. A news squib appeared finally announcing that he had agreed to go to Hollywood and write scenarios or edit scripts

or do something for the pictures, which always seem in need of having something done for them.

Years afterward he came back, bought himself a fifty-acre farm up near Darien, Conn., and settled down to living the life of a country literatteur, which means that he spends a little more than two thirds of his spare time looking over his estate and telling himself that tomorrow he will begin work in earnest on this new play or that new story or a certain scenario.

He is a fast worker, however, once he is interested. In January of 1927 he conceived the idea, born partly no doubt of his motion picture experiences, of reproducing as a melodrama one of our more popular murder trials in one of the most grimy of our court rooms.

He would not, he thought, have any stage curtain at all. When the auditors gathered they would find themselves spectators in this courtroom facing a judge's bench. The lights would be lowered, because it would be previous to the assembling of court. There would be no intermissions between acts, merely recesses of court. The story was to be that of a "Follies" girl's trial for the murder of her paramour.

He thought of this scheme for a play, as I say, in January, and he delivered the completed script sometime the following April. The play was tried during the summer, brought into New York in the early fall and immediately began doubling the early receipts of both "The Thirteenth Chair" and "Within the Law."

Mr. Veiller is a genius in that he is frank in his belief in himself as an unusual individual. He will boast, given the chance, that he might be able to write a poem, but has never tried and hopes he never will. He keeps

his press notices in his head with his plots, seldom goes to the theatre, never saves a program of any play, hates dinner clothes and familiarity, thinks he has few if any friends, likes old furniture, doesn't know why, doesn't care: calls his farm "Bayard's Burden" and, now that he has it paid for, doesn't know whatever he is going to do with all the rest of his money.

Mr. Veiller has had but the one new play produced in the eight years of which, to repeat, this volume is a record. That one, "The Trial of Mary Dugan" aforementioned, was produced by A. H. Woods at the National Theatre, New York, September 19, 1927.

WILLARD MACK

"BILL" MACK they call him mostly. Willard Mack is his name on theatre programs and as the author of forty plays, all of which have been produced and a fair percentage of which have been successful. But he was christened Charles Willard MacLaughlin in Cedar Rapids, Ia., in 1877, on the authority of the family records.

Willard Mack's father was a Canadian. His business was helping to build railroads. He was engaged in that occupation in Canada a few months after his son was born and young Willard lived in Canada until he was 8 years old. Hence the frequent assumption that he was born in Canada.

Willard did a bit of travelling as a youngster. He had to in order to keep up with the family. He was

brought down from Canada when he was 8 and entered in the Sisters' school of Brooklyn. He was there four years, and then he went back to Iowa. A few years later he was entered in Georgetown University in Washington, D. C., and there the drama germ, with which this account is particularly concerned, was hatched. He joined the Georgetown Dramatic Club and played a part in one of the club plays.

He was not, however, won over to the stage by a single appearance. He still wanted to be a professional baseball player. He had for years been a protégé of John McGraw, who was shortstop and field captain of the Cedar Rapids nine when Willard was a boy, and he was already what is known as a tower of strength to his university nine, pitching as good ball as any of them. He also had some thought of devoting himself seriously to professional bicycle riding. He rode for his alma mater with great enthusiasm and was mtached in 1896 with Fred Schade, the Southern champion. Schade beat him, it happened, which served to take the edge off that particular ambition. But still he had no thought of going into the theatre. He pitched semi-professional ball that summer, touring Iowa and Illinois with a club financed by T. M. Sinclair of Cedar Rapids.

But in the fall, when he went back to Georgetown, he was elected a member of the debating society and learned for the first time, as he puts it, that it is nice to listen to one's self. "Dear old Father Richards predicted I would eventually arrive at the bar," writes Willard: "and in some respects his prophecy must not go unnoticed. But the law had no appeal for me."

Events combined to lead him to the theatre. He

could not ride his bicycle or play ball at night and he was a restless youth. He took to playgoing. E. S. Willard, James A. Herne, William Gillette, E. H. Sothern, J. H. Stoddart became his idols. And that year he left school and joined a Washington stock company, calling himself Charles W. Mack. For five years thereafter he was an average player of average parts.

Then he tried writing. He had been a good pal of James J. Corbett and he decided to write a play for Gentlemen Jim. He called it "A Broadway Indian." It was so bad it drove him back to acting. For the next four years he kept on acting. And then he wrote another play, "In Wyoming," and presented it with a stock company he had himself organized for Duluth, Minn. It pleased the natives and encouraged the author. A few weeks later he sold the script for a thousand dollars cash—and *that* made a playwright of him.

In five years he had written eight plays, and acted in most of them—"God's Country," "Men of Steal," "Her Market Value," "Miracle Mary," "My Friend Judas," "So Much for So Much." These were some of his titles. In 1912 he did a one-act sketch he called "Kick In" and he and Marjorie Rambeau played it for sixty weeks in vaudeville. Then he fashioned it into a four-act play, sold it to A. H. Woods in New York who produced it with a young fellow Mack had met when he (the young fellow) was a prep school student at Georgetown in the leading rôle. His name was John Barrymore.

This was Willard Mack's introduction to Broadway. More successes, more money, more offers for more plays than he had ever dreamed of fell literally into his

lap. He couldn't believe it. He thought Mr. Woods was fooling him when the manager dashed into the Knickerbocker cafe and dragged him away from a mug of ale to make a curtain speech the first night of "Kick In." The success of the speech completed his undoing. He has been making them ever since.

That was fourteen years ago. Since then Mack has written and rewritten, primarily for the New York trade, nearly thirty plays. He has helped write and "doctored" many more. He is the most prolific of authors and his percentage of hits is fair. He has had his triumphs, two of them with Belasco productions, "Tiger Rose" and "The Dove." He has had his quick failures. And he has written many plays that were just good theatre entertainment that sold readily to the stock companies and played well on tour, plays like "The Noose," "A Voice in the Dark," "Breakfast in Bed," "Canary Dutch" and "The Scarlet Fox."

He is not the type, as may readily be imagined, who can follow a set routine. "Once an idea fastens upon me, I must write it and I must do nothing else until it has been written," he has told me. "I cannot work, however, until after midnight—between that hour and six the following morning I do my best work. I can't use a typewriter—I write all my stuff in longhand and a most exceptional stenographer types it."

When he plays, away from Broadway, he turns again to baseball, and to horse racing. He shoots in Connecticut with a pair of setter dogs he thinks are a little better than any other hunter's setter dogs, and he has followed the big game trails in Alberta and Alaska.

Like all men in their fifties he is searching for a philosophy and prone to admit that he still doesn't know what it is all about.

"I have watched my fellowmen pushing each other into the grave in the big struggle for what is called 'success'," he has written. "I have never yet found one who would admit that all the grilling he has gone through was worth what he finally accomplished. . . . I have written a lot of so-called successes and yet there isn't a play I have ever concocted that will live twenty-five years. Think of it!"

He sees the theatre in America as purely a business and believes honestly that the dramatist doesn't live who, having his choice between writing a play for a hundred thousand dollars or posterity, will not take the cash and let the credit go.

He sees Eugene O'Neill and Sidney Howard as playwrights who are writing for the future whether they know it or not. He believes in playwriting in general as the most enthralling form of gambling known to man. In addition to which it keeps you young.

But always he comes back to the warning that no person having anything to do with this most ephemeral of the arts should take himself seriously.

"No matter what success you have in the theatre," says "Bill" Mack, "they will remember Lindbergh when they can't even think of your name."

Mack, I think, is an honest journeyman among the playwrights. He knows the trade. He knows by the most intimate of contacts the audiences for which he writes. He is neither vainglorious nor is he without the

artist's conceit. He has taken life and the theatre in his stride and is still on the move.

Mr. Mack's plays produced since 1919:

"The Unknown Woman" (with Marjorie Blaine). Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, November 10, 1919.

"Breakfast in Bed" (an adaptation). Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Eltinge Theatre, New York, February 2, 1920.

"Near Santa Barbara." Produced by Wm. H. Wellman, at the Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, January 31, 1921.

"Smooth as Silk." Produced by Wm. H. Wellman, at the Lexington Theatre, New York, September 9, 1924.

"The Dove" based on the story by Gerald Beaumont). Produced by David Belasco, at the Empire Theatre, New York, February 11, 1925.

"Canary Dutch" (based on the story by John Morosco). Produced by David Belasco, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, September 8, 1925.

"Fanny" (with David Belasco). Produced by David Belasco, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, September 21, 1926.

"The Noose" (with H. H. Van Loan). Produced by Mrs. Henry B. Harris, by arrangement with Martin Sampter, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, October 20, 1926.

"Lily Sue." Produced by David Belasco, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, November 16, 1926.

"Hangman's House" (from the novel by Donn Byrne). Produced by William A. Brady Jr., and Dwight Deere Wiman, at the Forrest Theatre, New York, December 16, 1926.

"Honor Be Damned." Produced by William Mack by arrangement with David Belasco, at the Morosco Theatre, New York, January 26, 1927.

PHILIP DUNNING

PHILIP DUNNING was working at his regular job as stage director of the Marilyn Miller Company playing "Sunny" at the New Amsterdam Theatre in New York the night his play, "Broadway," was produced two blocks away at the Broadhurst.

The company voted him time off about 10 o'clock so he might run over to see how things were going. He was the tall, nervous gentleman who edged his way in with the crowd of standees at the back of the theatre and twitched excitedly as he listened to the calls for the author. No one suspected him and he got back to "Sunny" unmolested.

Next morning Mr. Dunning was on his way toward a bank account and fame, and a little while after that he resigned his job as stage manager. "Broadway" proved the outstanding melodramatic hit of the year.

George Abbott as has been reported, worked with Mr. Dunning, both in the editing and staging of "Broadway," but it was Mr. Dunning's play long before it was Mr. Abbott's, and Mr. Dunning's original idea. He had made something like ten drafts of his first script before he sold the last of them to William A. Brady.

Brady kept the play until his option lapsed and then Jed Harris, at that time making his first ventures as a producer, agreed to take a chance with "Broadway." He thought, however, that it would be wise to invite in a collaborator, and having worked with Mr. Abbott

in the staging of his first production, "Love 'Em and Leave 'Em," Harris suggested that Abbott be engaged to point up the script and help with the direction of "Broadway."

That was late in May. The first performance was given in Atlantic City, July 4. Harris had an idea of changing the name to "The Roaring Forties," but Dunning, fearful lest the public would accept the title as that of a play having to do with the California gold rush, held out for "Broadway." The program compromise was: "Broadway, a Comedy of the Roaring Forties, by Philip Dunning and George Abbott."

Mr. Dunning has spent practically all his life in the theatre. Born in Meriden, Conn., and tiring of both school and the job he had helping his father as a chemist's assistant, he practically ran away from home with what he describes as a "trick carnival," owned by an old friend of the family.

For the first summer he served principally as a magician's assistant, being the young man who was tied up in a mail sack in full view of the audience and afterward lowered into a tank of water where he was supposed to remain for minutes on minutes to both the horror and delight of the audience.

By the end of summer the excitement of being an "actor" had completely won the young man away from the least desire to return to school when winter came. He went promptly into "show business," learning to dance and singing when necessary. Often, I suspect, he sang whether it was necessary or not. He wrote and acted in skits, played in stock and finally got to Broadway.

He helped to write "Biff, Bang," a soldier show staged by the boys of the Pelham Bay Naval Base, and "Faint Heart." Then came the writing and peddling of "Broadway" as related. "Broadway" was followed by "Night Hostess," of which he is sole author.

Dunning gets much more fun out of working than he does out of playing. As a result it takes a lot of tempting to get him away from his Westport, Conn., home, where he lives quietly with his wife and eight-year-old daughter. His ambition is confined to a desire to write hits enough to keep his family and his miniature farm together.

Mr. Dunning's plays produced since 1919:

"Broadway" (with George Abbott). Produced by Jed Harris, at the Broadhurst Theatre, New York, September 16, 1926.
"Night Hostess." Produced by John Golden, at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York, September 12, 1928.

RACHEL CROTHERS

Rachel Crothers came out of the west to play an enthusiastic part in the play production of the east for many years. She is still an enthusiast, for all she sees the manners and morals of the theatre of her day replaced by others that are at least disturbing to her.

Born in Bloomington, Ill., educated at the State Normal University at Bloomington, she began playwriting in school. Also play production. She was the director of the Bloomington Dramatic Club and furnished, I suspect, most of the inspiration.

It was a natural step for her, after graduation, to continue her stage studies in the East. She joined the Wheatcroft School of Acting in New York and when she had completed the course stayed on as instructor. In this position she again wrote and produced many one-act pieces in which the students appeared as a part of their work.

In 1906 her first full length play was produced. This was "The Three of Us." That adventure, Miss Crothers has confessed, was for her "the beginning of Heaven." From then until 1925 she averaged a production a year. No one of her plays, I think, can be spoken of as a sensational hit, but neither can any of them be catalogued as in any sense a complete failure. A majority were of an even merit and most of them achieved a paying popularity.

Playgoers of other seasons will remember with satisfaction such Crothers' dramas as "A Man's World," (1909): "Old Lady 31," taken from the novel, (1916): "A Little Journey," (1918): "39 East," (1918): "Nice People," (1921): "Mary the Third," (1923): and "Expressing Willie," a success that saved the Actors' theatre that particular season.

Miss Crothers is still associated with the Actor's theatre, and its current activities are under her direction. She has definite ideas as to what may be accomplished in experimental work if there is a proper and understanding co-operation between playwrights, actors and play directors.

"Everything is done too quickly in the American theatre because of the overwhelming expense of production—the greatest danger and drawback to new and

experimental work," she has written. "I acknowledge an ambition to collect and work with a fine group of actors willing to stand together and devote their lives to the acting of good plays so that work as patient and fine may come out of the American theatre as I believe its great capacity can produce—if only our restlessness for change and greed for money can be replaced by humble devotion to ideals."

Miss Crothers was active during the war years as the founder and president of the Stage Women's War Relief. She has a home in Redding, Conn., where she spends her summers writing and planning. The winters she devotes to the rewriting and staging of the plays she writes in the summer. She finds critics good, bad and indifferent and clings to the same conviction that after all is said, done, written and produced that you, excellent reader, represent the only real critic.

"Nothing in the long run stands between the worker and the public," says she. "It is entirely between them as to what is really good and what is bad, what lives and what dies, and just what it is actually worth. Let the worker listen to his public and look within himself for his own shortcomings and heed nothing else."

WILLIAM HURLBUT

THERE are a number of playwrights who have for the last several years occupied a decidedly interesting position in the Broadway scheme of things. Having achieved an earned prominence, they seem always just

about to top this achievement with a success of the first class, yet never quite make it.

William Hurlbut, for instance, has written such promising and comparatively recent plays as "Romance and Arabella," for Laura Hope Crews: "The Bride of the Lamb," for Alice Brady and "Hidden," in which David Belasco presented Beth Merrill. Frequently it has been his fortune to miss popular success by sufficiently narrow margins to create comment.

His subjects, it is true, are not always as chaste as the Lady Grundy or the stricter Presbyterians believe they should be. His "Lilies of the Field" was a bit on the loose, dealing as it did with loose ladies, and Chicago still holds "Sin of Sins" against him. But his reactions are intelligent and his dramas usually forceful.

Born in 1883, in Belvidere, Ill., it was Hurlbut's intention to become an artist, or at least an illustrator. The distinction depends upon the type of artist to whom you happen to be talking. He studied at both the St. Louis and Chicago Art Schools and for a time did illustrating for the better illustrated magazines. When he decided to be a playwright, however, he gave up drawing once and for all and has never gone back to it.

His first produced play was "The Fighting Hope," which Belasco did for Blanche Bates. After this he wrote "The Writing on the Wall" for Olga Nethersole and "The Strange Woman" for Elsie Ferguson, among others. His "Hidden" was a much discussed play the season of 1926–27, but its phycho-analytical

theme, heavily underscored, was not to the liking of the larger paying public.

Mr. Hurlbut's plays produced since 1919:

"On the Stairs." Produced by Joseph E. Shea at the Playhouse, New York, September 25, 1922.

"Hail and Farewell." Produced by Joseph E. Shea, at the Morosco Theatre, New York, February 19, 1923.

"The Cups." Produced by Joseph E. Shea, at the Fulton Theatre, New York, November 12, 1923.

"Chivalry." Produced by Joseph E. Shea, at the Wallack's Theatre, New York, December 15, 1925.

"Bride of the Lamb." Produced by Macgowan, Jones and O'Neill, (in association with Robert Milton) at the Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, March 30, 1926.

"Hidden." Produced by David Belasco, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, October 4, 1927.

"Paradise." Produced by Robert Milton, at the 48th Street Theatre, New York, December 26, 1927.

ZOE AKINS

WHEN Zoë Akins came east from her native state of Missouri (she was born, according to the earlier records, in the little town of Humansville, though her interviewers usually report St. Louis, where she spent most of her life, as her native town) when Miss Akins came east she was welcomed with the hopeful prediction that she would make her mark as a playwright. And she did. But the hope has lingered that she is yet to do her best work and may, any season now, burst forth suddenly with what we shall be pleased to call her greatest play.

In St. Louis she achieved a considerable reputation as a poetess and as a valued contributor to William Marion Reedy's "Mirror." Her first play, a comedy called "Papa," was classified as most daring in its day. It had to do with a father and two daughters who discussed quite openly their various affairs and their sophisticated reactions to them.

She followed with "The Magical City," which helped distinguish the early career of the Washington Square Players, from which group the present Theatre Guild was later to grow. Then came her "Declassé," which won her the approval of critical New York and was carried to a popular success by Ethel Barrymore.

"Declassé" will be recalled as the story of the Lady Helen Haden, "last of the mad Varicks," an English woman of title whose father was an earl and her godmother a queen. She lived extravagantly, flirted outrageously, suffered defeat and social ostracism when she exposed her lover as a card cheat, came to America, lived wildly so long as her jewels supported her, refused to marry an American millionaire out of respect for her proud lineage and died as the result of a taxi accident.

Miss Akins afterward wrote "A Texas Nightingale," which won critical praise and failed of popular success, and readapted an old play, "Forget-me-Not." Under the new title of "Footloose" this was a road success with Margaret Anglin and William Faversham. In 1927–28 she produced "The Furies," a modernistic drama. This play brought Laurette Taylor back to prominence and was generously received by its critics. The larger public, however, again refused its support.

Miss Akins plays produced since 1919:

"Declassé." Produced by Charles Frohman, at the Empire Theatre, New York, October 6, 1919.
"Footloose." Produced by George C. Tyler, at the Greenwich Village Theatre, New York, May 10, 1919.
"A Royal Fandango." Produced by Arthur Hopkins, at the Plymouth Theatre, New York, November 12, 1923.
"The Moon-Flower." Produced by Charles L. Wagner, at the Astor Theatre, New York, February 25, 1924.
"First Love." Produced by Messrs. Shubert, at the Booth Theatre, New York, November 8, 1926.
"The Crown Prince." Produced by L. Lawrence Weber, at the Forrest Theatre, New York, March 23, 1927.
"The Furies." Produced by John Tuerk, at the Shubert Theatre, New York, March 7, 1928.

SAMUEL SHIPMAN

SAMUEL SHIPMAN is another of the busy collaborators. According to the record of his own memory he has written four plays without assistance and fifteen in which he has figured as the party of either the first or second parts.

He has, I assume, usually furnished the technique and the other fellow has brought him the idea. But so many things happen to an idea once two men begin putting it into acting form that by the time it finally emerges as a play it would require the most scientific of blood tests actually to pin parentage upon it.

I have always given "Shippie," as Broadway knows

him, credit for at least half the ideas presented in his collaborative efforts—unless I happened to be talking to the collaborators. Discretion in all things is a good working motto.

The four plays of acknowledged Shipman authorship are "The Spell," "Cheaper to Marry," "Lawful Larceny," and "The Day Lady."

Those in the writing of which he rendered or received first aid include "It Depends on the Woman," "The Kiss Charm," "Children of To-day," "The Good-for-Nothing," "Two Sweethearts," "Right or Wrong," "The Woman in Room 13," "Crooked Gamblers," "The Unwritten Chapter," "First Is Last," "East is West," "Friendly Enemies," "Creoles," "Crime," and "Kidnapper."

Mr. Shipman has entered his middle forties. He was born in New York, was earning a living of sorts when he was 6 years old and trying to write plays by the time he was 13. He managed to get through the public schools, and made Columbia, from which university he was graduated in 1906.

I asked him once what he thought of his first success, which was "Friendly Enemies." "I thought playwriting too good to be true," he answered, "and I proved it later."

Mr. Shipman's plays produced since 1919:

"The Crooked Square" (with Alfred C. Kennedy). Produced by Mrs. Henry B. Harris, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, September 10, 1923.

"No More Women" (with Neil Twomey). Produced by Schwab and Mandel, at the Ambassador Theatre, New York, August 3, 1926.

"Crime" (with John B. Hymer). Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Eltinge Theatre, New York, February 22, 1927.

"That French Lady" (with Neil Twomey). Produced by Jones and Green, at the Ritz Theatre, March 15, 1927.

THE LIGHTER TOUCH—

Being a sub-divisional group including one popular satirist of recent arrival and several of yesterday's favorite dramatists whose natural bent was for the writing of comedies reflecting the American scene and American character.

ROBERT EMMET SHERWOOD

No one had heard much about Robert Emmet Sherwood before the production of "The Road to Rome." A lot of people around the theatre district called him Bob, and a great many had predicted from time to time that if he ever did put his mind to it he probably could write a smart play.

Mr. Sherwood also belongs to the new school of reticent geniuses. Like the rest he does not see any particular reason why a playwright should talk about himself, or why the public should be avidly curious concerning his activities outside the theatre. Being tall enough to attract attention in a crowd he has grown up a sensitive and shy person.

However, it is our business on occasion to drag these shy folk into the open, and we are becoming more or less ruthless about it.

Know then that this Sherwood person was born 31 years ago in New Rochelle, N. Y. That he left there at the age of 2, not because of any developed prejudices against New Rochelle as a place of residence, but because his parents, who had the upper hand of him at the time, had decided that he should be moved.

His literary tendencies developed comparatively early. He was, a modest family pride permits his sisters to confess, the editor of a magazine called "The Children's Life" at 7, but gave it up a year later to rewrite "A Tale of Two Cities" because he found him-

self in disagreement with Charles Dickens as to the ending of that tale.

His schooling followed conventional lines until he was sent to Milton academy from which he was graduated in 1914. In 1918 they gave him an A.B. at Harvard, after which he took up with the war, joining the Black Watch in Canada, performing creditably therein and sustaining honorable wounds that eventually necessitated his discharge from the army.

In college he had edited the "Vanity Fair" number of the "Harvard Lampoon" and, it being a good number, Frank Crowninshield, editor of "Vanity Fair," gave him a job. He was the motion picture critic and, as I recall it, Dorothy Parker and Robert Benchley were at the same time writing pieces about the drama for the same magazine. One of Miss Parker's criticisms gave offense to a Broadway manager, who protested to Mr. Crowninshield, who spoke to Miss Parker, who answered with spirit and was fired.

Thereupon Mr. Benchley and Mr. Sherwood, rising manfully to the defense of the freedom of the critic and the rights of woman to speak her own mind, quit their jobs in protest. As a sympathetic strike their action did not make the first pages of the press, but it gave the strikers vast satisfaction and was a lot of fun.

From there Mr. Sherwood went to "Life," taking with him his motion picture column. Later he was made associate editor and finally editor in chief of that weekly.

In drama he confesses having written one play before "The Road to Rome." It was called "Tom Ruggles' Surprise" and was ready for production in 1906

when the author was going on 11. For one reason and another its production was never achieved.

Twenty years later we find him, a returned warrior utterly and a little bitterly disillusioned as to war. He still clung to his early enthusiasm for some of war's heroes, however, notably Hannibal. Now he sat down to do two things—strip the bunk from another glamorously mystifying section of history, which is a happy ambition of the time, and to write something that should carry on the good work in helping to free the theatre of its set conventions which had been begun auspiciously with the production of "What Price Glory?" I like Mr. Sherwood's own explanation of his play's beginning.

" 'The Road to Rome' was inspired by an unashamedly juvenile hero worship for Hannibal," he writes in the entertaining preface to the version of the play published by Scribner's: "in manner and intent it is incorrigibly romantic. . . . Whether or not Mr. Shaw started it, there is now a widespread and generally commendable conspiracy to divest history of its textbook formality, and to present historic personages with the same easy intimacy that is displayed by Texas Guinan when introducing a new Black Bottom dancer.

"Clio has always been an austere figure, clad in marble robes and perched up before public libraries for the purpose of scaring away those who approach such dignified edifices with another than a serious, studious intent. Nowadays, Clio is being urged to step down from her pedestal and meet the boys.

"People are begining to realize that history is actually the biography of mankind and, as such, the great-

est 'success story' that has ever been written. What could be more dramatic, more inspirational, than the narrative of man's ascent from an impoverished, illiterate cave-dweller to a Calvin Coolidge or a Henry L. Mencken?

" 'The Road to Rome' is, of course, another evidence of this undeniable trend—another offspring of the union between fiction and fact. In presenting historic events and people in terms of modern life, I am using a formula that is not new: the fact that it is not new, however, does not signify that it is illegitimate."

Following this success Mr. Sherwood accepted one of those journeyman playwright jobs which, to the author new to fame and the returns of success in the theatre are irresistibly tempting because they pay so well.

This one happened to be the dramatization of a Ring Lardner short story called "The Love Nest." It proved disappointing entertainment, neither the Lardner wit nor the superior Sherwood sense of selection in transferring the material to the stage working to the play's advantage.

He then turned to another amusingly satirical idea of his own and produced "The Queen's Husband." This, the imagined adventures of a timid king who comes suddenly into power when his dominant wife makes such a tour of America as Queen Marie of Rumania had made the year before, provided good entertainment and was interestingly produced and played. It suffered, however, the disadvantage of being compared constantly with "The Road to Rome."

Mr. Sherwood has lost none of his earlier enthusiasms for the theatre, though naturally they have been tempered by his adventures. I asked him what, in the light of his experiences, were his present conclusions as to the state of the theatre and the drama.

"I have come to the conclusion," he wrote, "that to be a successful playwright you have to cheat a little. This goes for all other professions, too."

The law of compensation works in mysterious ways. Both Sherwood and Stallings came out of the war battered and probably, as suggested, fairly embittered. Yet both have built success from that collection of character-molding adventures which the war provided. Both have had the better of what their Broadway associates, simplifying Emerson, speak of as "the breaks."

"My luckiest break," the playwright Sherwood confessed to one of the few reviewers to whom he has talked, "was being made a motion picture critic because I was the only one on the staff who went to pictures. The dramatic critics staged a show in which I put over a blues song with Leonore Ulric, Magalo Gillmore, June Walker, Helen Hayes, Winifred Lenihan and Mary in the chorus. I picked Mary to be the leading lady of this establishment."

"Mary" is Mary Brandon, actress, whose uncle is Booth Tarkington. When "Mary" and "Bob" were married shortly after the critics' show, Douglas Fairbanks was an usher at their wedding.

It was Mrs. Sherwood's thought that they should have a house, Mr. Sherwood admits, that fired the play-

wrighting ambition. It was the necessity of meeting payments on the house that kept it fired. It was a happy meeting with Jane Cowl when she was playing in "Easy Virtue" that interested that actress in the rôle of Amytis, and it was a happier meeting with those still young and adventurous producers, William A. Brady, Jr. and Dwight Deere Wiman, that got it produced. Altogether it was a lucky break for the theatre when these things came to pass.

Mr. Sherwood's produced plays are:

"The Road to Rome." Produced by William A. Brady Jr. and Dwight Deere Wiman. Playhouse, New York, January 31, 1927.

"The Queen's Husband." Produced by William A. Brady Jr. and Dwight Deere Wiman. Playhouse, New York, January 25, 1928.

"The Love Nest." Produced by The Actor-Managers, Inc. Comedy Theatre, New York, December 22, 1928.

GEORGE MICHAEL COHAN

THERE are very few chapters in this book into which the story of George Michael Cohan would not fit. I might write of him as one of the Significant Influences of the American theatre. Or as is so frequently done, as an American Institution. He could be placed at the head of the words and music lads, or among the most successful writers of American comedy. He is both a many-sided and a one-sided man. He commands great versatility of mind and talents, and yet so definite is the Cohan individuality that all he does is unmistak-

ably dominated and colored by all that he is. For a quarter century he has belonged to every side of the theatre.

George is fifty years old and for forty of those fifty years he has been incessantly active in the theatre. He has made millions and lost probably half as much as he has made. I doubt if he ever checked up. I doubt if he knows to-day how much he is worth or cares greatly. Money meant a lot to him while he was on the way up. But afterward, after all the comforts they could ask for had been provided for his family, and for many who were not members of the family, he lost interest in money as money.

I don't know in which division of his activities he has been of most benefit to the native theatre. He set a style in stage dancing. He completely changed the pace, if not the form, of this country's musical comedies. During the ten years following the production of his "Little Johnny Jones" he was the model and his work the pattern from which and to which all similar work was scaled and by comparison with which it was largely judged. You might speak of his career as having been amazingly American and keep well within the letter and spirit of the truth.

George's parents were show folk, Jere John Cohan (Keohane was the family name the generation previous) and Helen Costigan Cohan, his wife. Their son, born to the theatre, was considerate enough to arrive in the summer. The date was July 4, 1878, which many people have sought to regard as significant. Especially press agents.

He toured with the family when touring was neces-

sary, pecked at such school books as were put in his way and studied the violin. There was a time, so I have heard, when there was no instrument in the orchestra on which George could not play a tune of some character, and play most of them very well. Which made him a sort of prodigy.

He was 9 years old when he first made a public appearance. The event occurred in Haverstraw, N. Y., and the play was "Daniel Boone." After that as a boy he played the hero in one of the "Peck's Bad Boy" comedies and had a lot more fun than any other member of the cast. That was in 1890.

Mostly, however, he toured with the other Cohans, his father, mother and sister Josephine. Father and mother played dramatic and comedy sketches, George played the violin and Josephine danced. The variety season over they would join a stock company for the summer months. Sometimes they continued in stock all winter.

By the time he was 15 George had decided to become a song writer. "Why Did Nellie Leave Her Home?" was the title of an early number, indicating his precocious interest in the social problems of the day. "Venus, My Shining Star" was another. He must have been all of 19 or 20 when he wrote "I Guess I'll Have to Telegraph My Baby." As I recall the gossip of the day it was this song that attracted the attention of Ethel Levey and, in a way, brought her into the Cohan family.

"You certainly can write songs," said Ethel, meeting George.

"You certainly can sing them," replied George.

And so they were married. And in time a daughter, Georgette, was born to them.

So far as the more or less legitimate theatre is concerned, the Cohan career started the season of 1899–1900 with the production of his first three-act play, "The Governor's Son." He had elaborated this from one of his vaudeville sketches written for the family. There were several of these sketches and all popular. So popular in fact that during a week of celebration on the roof of the Masonic temple in Chicago, J. J. Murdock (since become a magnate with the Orpheum vaudeville interests) paid the Four Cohans the then unheard of sum of $3,000 for a single week's appearance after they (the Cohans) had been voted the most popular act in all vaudeville.

"The Governor's Son" did not, as might popularly be assumed in the light of later events, cause an immediate stir. It was played first at the old Fourteenth Street Theatre in New York. Then moved uptown (to Thirty-fourth Street) and was voted a failure at the Savoy. The play did very well on the road, however, playing the popular-priced circuits. So did "Running for Office," which was another expanded vaudeville act produced two years later.

The important step-up of this particular period occurred when Mr. Cohan met Sam H. Harris and vice versa. It was at a clam chowder party on Staten Island and, according to the more reliable of the historians of the time, Mr. Cohan was still ambitiously hoping to see his plays produced in "$2 theatres." Mr. Harris was as ambitiously hopeful about directing the destinies of a $2 star. Mr. Cohan had what

Mr. Harris described as a great chance, and Mr. Harris had what Mr. Cohan suspected was a growing bankroll, due to his success as the manager of one Terence McGovern, a pugnacious youth who had for many years successfully knocked his prize-ring opponents endways and often galley west. Mr. Harris had also been the manager of numerous burlesque troupes and a partner in the firm of Sullivan, Harris and Woods.

The Harris-Cohan liking for each other was immediate and their agreement to become partners as simple and direct as the Levey-Cohan confession regarding the songs.

"I'd like to be your manager," said Mr. Harris, between laughs at the Cohan quips.

"I certainly need one," replied Mr. Cohan.

And that was the beginning of a business association and intimate friendship that endured for eighteen years, to be made closer by a double romance that made one Nolan sister Mrs. Harris and another Mrs. Cohan in 1908, after George and Ethel Levey Cohan had agreed to go their separate and less conflicting ways.

It was in 1904 that Cohan & Harris made their first bid for recognition in the $2 theatres with "Little Johnny Jones." The minor centers took to it immediately, New York a trifle reluctantly a year later. Mr. Cohan starred in it for two years, gathering in more money than he previously had ever dreamed of. From that point forward the Cohan march never faltered and the Cohan standards of taste, quality and character in entertainment steadily improved.

Music plays fairly flowed from his pen the next several years. "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway," (with Fay Templeton), "George Washington, Jr.," (in which he starred), "Fifty Miles from Boston," "The Talk of New York," (with Victor Moore), "The Yankee Prince," "The American Idea." These were his first flag-waving days, as the caricaturists saw him. Probably no one was ever less deliberate or intentionally less inclined to exploit his patriotism for gain than he. Strange as it may seem he believed it.

About this time the Cohan ego was possessed of an urge to write straight comedy. He tried one called "Popularity" and it failed. Following his years of success the failure was a blow to his pride. It also made him mad. The season after that he tried again with a dramatization of the "Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford" stories and won a tremendous success.

This was the beginning of another phase of his development. He went back to musical comedy occasionally after that, did several smart Cohanesque revues, but he held pretty strictly to the straight plays. A dramatization of Earl Derr Biggers' "Seven Keys to Baldpate," which gave him definite standing, even with those who previously had not been willing to accept him seriously as a dramatist: "The Miracle Man," "Hit-the-Trail Halliday," "A Prince There Was—" these all represented a conscious striving for improvement. They also may be accepted as proof that improvement was being achieved.

It was about this time that the Actors' strike broke down temporarily the Cohan morale and made of him an unhappy puppet of fate and circumstance.

When the actors walked out on the managers to enforce a correction of accepted abuses which had become commonplace, George, being manager as well as actor, elected to side with the managers. In opposition to the Actors' Equity Association he organized the Actors' Fidelity Association and fought the strikers with every weapon he could command.

When the Equity won its fight he became embittered in defeat and miserably unhappy, but fortunately healing time put him straight again, mentally and physically. He has been most creditably active the last seven or eight years in many divisions of play writing and play production. He adapted and brought out Cora Gantt's "The Tavern," a clever forerunner of many satires. He produced Arthur Goodrich's "So This is London," wrote and produced his own "Little Nelly Kelly," and "The Rise of Rosie O'Reilly," wrote and played in "The Song and Dance Man" and in "American Born," and wrote and produced "The Hometowners" and "The Baby Cyclone."

They are native to the soil, these plays. The musical comedies come mostly from the sidewalks of New York or the lowlier homes adjacent thereto. The straight comedies are studies of native character most frequently placed in favorable contrast to the breeds of other nations. There is the urge for swell fronts and real society in many of the Cohan plays, but these never ring quite as true as the homelier comedies.

At 50, and now the last of that famous quartet of Cohans, George is more active than he has been in many seasons. A musicalized version of "Broadway Jones," which he wrote as a straight comedy, is called

"Billie." And he has produced two comedies, Ring Lardner's "Elmer the Great" and J. C. and Elliott Nugent's "By Request."

The Cohan plays produced since 1920 include—

"Madeline and the Movies." Produced by the author, at the Gaiety Theatre, New York, March 6, 1922.
"Little Nelly Kelly." Produced by the author, at the Liberty Theatre, New York, November 13, 1922.
"The Rise of Rosie O'Reilly." Produced by the author, at the Liberty Theatre, New York, December 25, 1923.
"The Song and Dance Man." Produced by the author, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, December 31, 1923.
"American Born." Produced by the author, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, October 5, 1925.
"The Home Towners." Produced by the author, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, August 23, 1926.
"Baby Cyclone." Produced by the author, at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, September 12, 1927.
"Merry Malones." Produced by the author, at the Erlanger's Theatre, New York, September 26, 1927.
"Whispering Friends." Produced by the author, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, February 20, 1928.
"Billie." Produced by the author, at the Erlanger's Theatre, New York, October 1, 1928.

EDGAR SELWYN

THERE are many hundreds of playwrights. Too, too many hundreds. But most of the real work of successful playwriting over any given period is done usually by less than a score of dependables.

I look back over the records of the theatre covering the period from 1915 to 1925. The names of ten or a dozen dramatists leap out at me and arrange themselves automatically in diagrammatic lines that run up and down in keeping with their activities. Many of them go farther back than 1915, and most of them are still successfully active. But they were most consistently productive during that period. They include, among others, Edgar Selwyn.

If you ask Edgar Selwyn about Edgar Selwyn, he will tell you that it all started, so far as he is concerned, back in the Winter of 1893 when he was 17 years old, in Chicago and broke. There is probably not a worse place in the world to be broke in in winter than Chicago, unless it be Itusk, Siberia. Edgar thought he would commit suicide, and would have, too, if the river had not been frozen. The ice discouraged him and before he could borrow an ice saw he had found a job. The job got him to New York and shortly thereafter he was an usher in the Herald Square Theatre.

It was Richard Mansfield who inspired Mr. Selwyn to become an actor. At least it was an imitation of Richard Mansfield that he was doing in the rear of the theatre for the entertainment of the other ushers that got Mr. Selwyn fired. And it was being fired that gave Mr. Selwyn the suggestion that if he was good enough to make a Mansfield mad he must be pretty good. Naturally Mr. Selwyn was too young at that time to realize how little it took to make Mr. Mansfield mad. Almost anyone could do it. Almost everyone did.

However, thus inspired the young enthusiast called

on William Gillette. As the story still goes, before he sent in his card he took the precaution to write "Important" on it. Mr. Gillette received the card, noted the "important," saw the actor and decided it didn't mean anything. Thoughtlessly, however, Mr. Gillette returned the card to Mr. Selwyn, after scribbling "Introducing" above the name, and sent him to the stage manager. When the stage manager received the card it read: "Introducing Edgar Selwyn. Important."

Being a smart stage manager, imbued with every desire to please his employer, this most dutiful person promptly fired one of the other actors and gave Mr. Selwyn a job.

Mr. Selwyn took to playwriting almost as soon as he took to acting. His first was called "A Rough Rider's Romance," but he very, very seldom speaks of it. This was during the days of the Spanish American war and he wrote another in one act called "A Night in Havana" which was produced by the Rochester Stock company with which he was working at the time. His first taste of success came with the production of "The Country Boy." The sensation, as he recalls it, was simply great, though he didn't really believe it for many months.

He was a prodigious worker. One play led to another until among a lot of them he had to his credit "The Adoption of Archibald," "It's All Your Fault," "Pierre of the Plains," (in which he starred), "The Arab," "Rolling Stones," (in which he dramatized the incident of the near-suicide in Chicago): "Nearly Married," "The Naughty Wife," "The Mirage,"

"Coming Home to Roost," "The Crowded Hour" (with Channing Pollock) and "Dancing Mothers," (with Edmund Goulding).

During the middle period of his theatre experiences he went into the playbroking business with his brother, Archibald, Crosby Gaige, Roi Cooper Megrue and Elizabeth Marbury. The firm, known as the American Play Co., made several productions. Among their activities the season of 1912–13 was the production of a melodrama called "Within the Law." (See Bayard Veiller.)

This play was an overnight sensation on Broadway. In the next few years, with four and five companies playing the Veiller drama on tour the returns to its owners were well over a million dollars. They followed this success with another that was similar. They bought the rights to "Twin Beds" from William Harris, Jr., after that playwright had lost faith in it. With Madge Kennedy in the chief rôle this comedy also made a fortune for the Selwyns. Their luck did not always hold, however. An unfortunate moving-picture venture of which the Goldwyn Company is the outgrowth—Samuel Goldfish, furnishing the "Gold" and the Selwyns the "wyn" for that firm name—cost them considerably more than a pretty penny, and various other failures have sapped their resources from time to time. To off-set these they also have enjoyed several successes. Later the firm was dissolved, the Selwyns continuing play production, Miss Marbury and associates going on with the American Play Company. Now the Selwyns and Crosby Gaige are producing plays independently.

All of which is here recalled as an explanation of why Mr. Selwyn has not been as consistently active as a playwright, the last few years, as he was formerly.

He was born in 1876 in Cincinnati, but was moved almost immediately to Toronto, Canada: from there to San Francisco, California, and finally to Selma, Alabama. He devotes his mornings to writing, he tells me, and does not always confine himself to writing plays. He still is possessed of the hope that one day he will write THE play that will make everybody sit erect, especially dramatic critics, and is much more cheerfully optimistic about everything, including critics, than most of his fellows.

Mr. Selwyn's plays produced in 1919:

"The Mirage." Produced by the Selwyns, at the Times Square Theatre, New York, Sept. 30, 1920.

"Anything Might Happen." Produced by Selwyn & Co., at the Comedy Theatre, New York, February 20, 1923.

"Dancing Mothers" (with Edmund Goulding). Produced by Edgar Selwyn, at the Booth Theatre, New York, August 11, 1924.

"Dear Sir." Produced by Philip Goodman, at the Times Square Theatre, New York, Sept. 23, 1924.

"Something to Brag About" (with William LeBaron). Produced by Edgar Selwyn, at the Booth Theatre, New York, August 13, 1925.

JAMES FORBES

JAMES FORBES is one of a group of American dramatists who found success sudden and surprisingly sat-

isfying. As a result of the discovery he involuntarily withdrew gradually from theatre competitions and enjoyed his retirement as much as a normally restless and preferably active person can enjoy retirement of any character.

I group Mr. Forbes with the American dramatists despite the fact that he was born in Salem, Ontario, and educated in the high schools and at the Collegiate Institute of Galt, Ontario. He has spent all his working life in America, is a voting citizen and has won his successes with plays that are peculiarly American in theme, character and spirit.

I need mention only "The Chorus Lady," his first and best remembered success: "The Travelling Salesman," "The Show Shop" and "The Famous Mrs. Fair," the last-named one of the best of the after-war plays, to remind playgoers of his closely knit kinship with native themes and characters.

"The Chorus Lady" was originally a one-act sketch played with success in vaudeville by Rose Stahl, one of the best comediennes of that day. Mr. Forbes, who had left Canada when he left school, settled in Chicago, worked in a commission house in South Water Street and afterward tried acting. From that experience he drifted into dramatic criticism as well as more useful newspaper work, and finally tried his hand at playwriting with the sketch as a result.

He was both press agent and company manager for the late Henry B. Harris before he expanded "The Chorus Lady" into a full length play. After that, as so often happens, he was practically nothing but a playwright and stockbroker's client. Client and friend

as well, he tells me. He sweetened their profits almost as often as they added to his.

In addition to the plays mentioned Mr. Forbes has written "A Rich Man's Son," "The Endless Chain," and "Young Blood." None of these did as well as their father hoped they would. His latest effort is, or rather was, "Precious."

Questioned closely as to the conclusions his theatre experiences have brought him Mr. Forbes is free to admit that he thinks—

Playwrights have developed a great advance in the originality of their themes, and oftentimes as great a laziness in their execution, which he sees as the result of too much striving for new forms of expression:

That actors have developed a marvellous general excellence in acting but little that is exalting:

That directors are too often in front of the play instead of being where they belong, behind it:

That managers—well that some regard the theatre as the home of art and others as a business pure and simple but not necessarily pure, and

That critics are people who should never be quarreled with in print out of consideration for those managers who might produce Forbes plays.

Once Mr. Forbes thought he wanted to be a physician. Then he favored stock broking. He still is convinced he would like to be a landscape architect and will doubtless stick to playwriting.

Mr. Forbes' plays produced since 1919 include:

"The Famous Mrs. Fair." Produced by A. L. Erlanger, at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, December 22, 1919.

"The Endless Chain." Produced by A. L. Erlanger, at the Cohan Theatre, New York, September 4, 1922.

"Young Blood." Produced by The Dramatists Theatre Inc., at the Ritz Theatre, New York, November 24, 1925.

"Precious." Produced by Rosalie Stewart, at the Royale Theatre, New York, January 14, 1929.

FRANK CRAVEN

I HAVE referred in another place to the rather determinedly modest attitude of the young moderns among the dramatists. There is also a similarly retiring group I find among the native playwrights who people the middle distances just back of us. A group that, still active, was more prominently represented in the theatre ten and a dozen years ago than it is today.

There, to start with, is Frank Craven. Mr. Craven came within not less than an ace, I should say, of being chosen a Pulitzer prize winner the year he wrote "The First Year." The prize had not at that time taken on the importance it since has acquired as a theatre award, and the committee, being book conscious, considered Zona Gale's "Miss Lulu Bett" the better choice of the two. The committee may have been right, but there were ever so many people in the Broadway district who thought differently.

Mr. Craven is a modest chap. Delve into his history and you find that he was for many years associated with acting rather than playwriting. Both his father and mother were players, she Ella Mayer Craven and he John T. Craven of the old Boston Museum Com-

pany. Frank was born in Boston in 1880. And in 1883 they carried him on the stage in "The Silver King."

He has in his time played many parts, and if it happen that you remember just one of them—and that one the rôle of Jimmy Gilley in George Broadhurst's "Bought and Paid For"—you will forever have a recollection of this actor-author that should be touched with both gratitude and admiration.

It was his success as Gilley, I think, that first gave Craven a real confidence in himself both as actor and playwright. He had written sketches for vaudeville and his beloved Lambs' Club gambols before then, but he had never really tried his hand at a play. Then, in 1913 he wrote, staged and played in a human little home comedy called "Too Many Cooks." This was not a big success with any save those who saw and loved it, but it was a start. Afterward the plot was used in a musical comedy called "Going Up" and Frank acted in that, too.

His writing produced another comedy, "This Way Out," and he made a musical comedy book out of William Collier's "The Dictator," calling it "The Girl from Home." Then, in 1920, came "The First Year."

This is a homey story of Illinois folk—a flustered mother; a lovable, deaf father; a romantic girl with two suitors; a boy who wants to settle down and another who wants to roam the far places in search of romance.

Craven played the conservative boy and married the girl. He had to promise to move to Joplin, Mo., however, before she would have him. She had no

thought of marrying, settling down and raising a family there in Illinois.

In Joplin there is the usual first year quarrel, starting with trivial irritations and growing into something serious before either realizes it. The quarrel is helped along by the appearance of the romantic and far-travelled rival, and finally the girl packs her satchel and goes home to mother. The conclusion, as is demanded of all good American comedies, is sweetly simple and the reconciliation touched with sentiment.

"The First Year" did not win the Pulitzer prize but it ran for nearly eight hundred performances, was played long on tour and is still a favorite stock company choice.

Withdrawing from the acting company to write more plays and toy a bit with the production of them, Craven wrote "Spite Corner," "New Brooms" and "Money from Home" the next few years. None of these was quite good enough to make the popular grade.

A year ago he wrote, produced and played in a golf comedy, "The Nineteenth Hole," and came again into something of the favor he enjoyed with "The First Year." This is the story of a scandal growing out of one thing that led to another in a golf club, concerning particularly the experiences of a professional person who became a hopeless addict of the game the summer he moved into the suburbs so he might do his literary work without interruption. Being a golfer himself, Mr. Craven is able to talk their language to other addicts, and his business has prospered greatly in consequence.

Mr. Craven's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"The Girl from Home" (a musical version of Richard Harding Davis's farce "The Dictator"). Produced by Charles Dillingham, at the Globe Theatre, New York, May 3, 1920.
"The First Year." Produced by John Golden, at the Little Theatre, New York, October 20, 1920.
"Spite Corner." Produced by John Golden, at the Little Theatre, New York, September 25, 1922.
"Up She Goes." Produced by William A. Brady, Ltd., at the Playhouse, New York, November 5, 1922.
"New Brooms." Produced by Frank Craven, at the Fulton Theatre, New York, November 17, 1924.
"The 19th Hole." Produced by A. L. Erlanger, at the George M. Cohan Theatre, New York, October 11, 1927.

A. E. THOMAS

ANOTHER native son of creditable achievement is A. E. Thomas. The initials stand for Albert Ellsworth, if it happen that anyone is curious, but these are names seldom spoken outside the playwright's family. "Tommy" usually represents the familiarity with which the dignity of the playwright is properly discounted by his intimates. Comparative strangers call him Al.

As far back as 1919, which is not so very far back, Mr. Thomas was still a reporter working with the Dana heirs and assigns on the New York Sun. He had been there since 1895. He was known then to the city

editors of the opposition as the Sun's star man. It may be possible that in those days he could have been forced to admit the honor if pressed, though I doubt it. But even to this star reporter the newspaper business had lost its glamour. He wanted most awfully to get out of it.

He had written one novel, "Cynthia's Rebellion," and a play, "Her Husband's Wife." The novel, published in 1903, did fairly well. The play finally came to the notice of Henry Miller, was bought, was played by Mr. Miller and Laura Hope Crews, achieved a considerable success and made it possible for Mr. Thomas to quit being a reporter.

Thereafter he devoted himself rather assiduously to his adopted profession. A play a season was his average output, and these included "The Divorce Fund," "What the Doctor Ordered," "Little Boy Blue," (a musical comedy adaptation): "The Rainbow," which Mr. Miller also played with success: "The Big Idea" (with Clayton Hamilton): "Come Out of the Kitchen" (based on an Alice Duer Miller story): "Just Suppose," the first and best of the Prince of Wales romances, though not quite virile enough to live: "Our Nell," an amusing hokum melodrama, (with Brian Hooker), from which the internationally quoted line, "They ain't done right by our Nell," was taken: and "Embers," an adaptation from the French which was the last play in which Henry Miller appeared in New York. Recently Mr. Thomas wrote a comedy, "The Big Pond," with George Middleton, and later both wrote and appeared in a bootlegging melodrama called "Vermont."

He is a playwright of serious mind, tempered with a nice sense of humor. He was born in Chester, Mass., in 1872, and took both an A.B. and an A.M. at Brown University. Like all the more observant playwrights Mr. Thomas would change some things, but both his resentments and his enthusiasms are wholesome and few.

"I detest in the theatre, as elsewhere, skim milk masquerading as cream," he has said. "The Bunk enrages me, and we have a lot of it lately."

Otherwise he is happy unless someone mistakes him for Augustus Thomas and asks him how he happened to write "Arizona."

Mr. Thomas's plays produced since 1919 have been:

"Just Suppose." Produced at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, November 1, 1920.

"The Champion" (with Thomas Louden). Produced by Sam H. Harris, at the Longacre Theatre, New York, January 3, 1921.

"Our Nell" (with Brian Hooker). Produced by the Hayseed Productions Inc., at the Bayes Theatre, New York, December 4, 1922.

"The Jolly Roger." Produced at the National Theatre, New York, August 30, 1923.

"Fool's Bells." Produced by Donald Gallagher and James W. Elliott, at the Criterion Theatre, New York, December 22, 1925.

"Embers" (an adaptation). Produced at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, February 1, 1926.

"Lost" (with George Agnew Chamberlain). Produced by Ramsey Wallace, at the Mansfield Theatre, New York, March 28, 1927.

"Vermont." Produced by George M. Cohan at Erlanger's Theatre, New York, January 8, 1929.

AVERY HOPWOOD

I COME to the name of Avery Hopwood and am conscious of a playgoer's sense of loss. He was drowned, you will recall, in the surf at Nice last summer.

The sense of loss, however, is one of sentiment, born of a memory of what he had done, rather than a feeling that, at 46, he still had many active and promisingly productive years ahead of him.

Mr. Hopwood was rich and self-indulgent. He might have written, or helped to write, several good theatre pieces in the next ten years, but the chances are strong that he would not have done so.

The memory of him is pleasant. He was a daring and often a bold fellow, but never vicious, and, as Leonard Hall once wrote of him, "he was the only living man who could write French farce better than a Frenchman." He gave most of us many amusing evenings in the theatre.

I sketch the Hopwood career briefly as a reminder of his standing among native dramatists. He was born in Cleveland and escaped therefrom, he used to say, at the age of reason. He went through the West High School in his home city and on to the University of Michigan, from which he was graduated with an A.B. in 1905.

He took naturally to writing. It was the only thing

he could do, he often said, and certainly the only thing he wanted to do, though he did have some thought of being an actor at one time.

He was New York correspondent for the Cleveland Leader when he sold his first play—a comedy called "Clothes." William A. Brady bought it for Grace George, and Channing Pollock helped reshape it nearer to that actress's prevailing needs and desires.

The theatre gods were good to Avery Hopwood. He had gone but a little way farther when he collaborated with Mary Roberts Rinehart on a farce called "Seven Days" which proved the hit of the season.

The royalties from this play, with those he had already received from "Clothes," gave him an independence early in life. He promptly set his father up in business in Cleveland, bought his mother more rich and fancy clothes than she, plain little mother that she was, had ever dreamed of wearing and went to writing the plays that interested him. He never married.

Nearly everything Hopwood touched enjoyed some measure of success. I am not so sure he was not the writer of more plays that actually paid profits than any other American playwright. His successes included not alone "Seven Days," but such later hits as "Nobody's Widow," "Fair and Warmer," "The Gold Diggers," and "The Bat," which earned two or three fortunes and set a fashion in mystery plays.

The last plays he wrote were of a cheaper quality. They included "Ladies' Night," "The Demi-Virgin," "Why Men Leave Home," "The Best People," (with David Gray) "Naughty Cinderella" and "The Garden of Eden." But by this time he had, as I say,

lost his keener interest in the theatre and had nothing much to stir his ambition.

I asked him on his last visit to these shores what he thought of the theatre in America. "I think it has reached at the present moment the highest level of achievement which has been reached in our country," he wrote, "and it is the most prosperous and vital theatre in the world."

Mr. Hopwood's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"The Gold Diggers." Produced by David Belasco, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, September 30, 1919.

"The Girl in the Limousine" (with Wilson Collison). Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Eltinge Theatre, New York, October 6, 1919.

"Why Men Leave Home." Produced by Wagenhals & Kemper, at the Morosco Theatre, New York, September 12, 1922.

"Little Miss Bluebeard." Produced by Charles Frohman, Inc., in association with E. Ray Goetz, at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, August 28, 1923.

"The Alarm Clock" (an adaptation). Produced by A. H. Woods, at the 39th Street Theatre, New York, December 24, 1923.

"The Best People" (with David Gray). Produced by Charles Frohman, Inc., at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, August 19, 1924.

"The Harem" (an adaptation). Produced by David Belasco, at the Belasco Theatre, New York, December 2, 1924.

"Naughty Cinderella" (an adaptation). Produced by Charles Frohman, Inc., at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, November 9, 1925.

"The Garden of Eden" (an adaptation). Produced by Arch

Name, and the fullness thereof. Avery Hopwood

Age, and the correctness thereof--shall we say approximately? Yes, say approximately

Birthplace and when escape therefrom was successfully accomplished, if ever.... Cleveland - Escape accomplished soon after reaching the age of Reason

Schooldays, and thence to what seat of learning?
Cleveland West High School - then to the University of Michigan - whence graduated as an A.B.

Early inclinations toward work, if any....
Writing - because there was nothing else that I knew how to do, or wished to do

Early inclinations toward the drama, if any....
Wanted to be an actor, but after careful consideration of my physiognomy decided that I had better write for the stage rather than appear on it

Early favorites of the stage.....
Maude Adams - Julia Marlowe
Mrs Fiske - Mansfield - Ethel Barrymore

Your first play....
"Clothes" (in collaboration with Channing Pollock)

Your other plays....
"Fair and Warmer" - "The Gold Diggers", "Nobody's Widow" "Our Little Wife" - "Sadie Love" - "The Bat" & "Seven Days" (with Mary Roberts Rinehart - "Little Miss Bluebeard" - "Naughty Cinderella" (and about 20 others)

Your first production.....
"Clothes"

Your first success and what did you think of it...
"Clothes" - My feelings were best expressed by a line from a song, popular at the moment: "My Gawd, how the money rolls in"

* Your present conclusions, in the light of all your experiences, as to the state of the drama, the theatre and, if you like, the state of Denmark.....
I think that the theatre in America has reached at the present moment the highest level of achievement which has yet been recorded in our country and it is the most prosperous and vital theatre in the world. It should be strictly defended from the encroachments of "censorship"

So much about your worktime routine, your ambitions, your working life, your playtime activities, your growing family and such other thoughts as you would like to see recorded in literature that shall be practically deathless.
I stay to work for four hours each day. In my "playtime" I like to go to the theatre - in New York, and abroad. Generally speaking I like dramatic critics - though there are some things that I like better.

Avery Hopwood

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* Including, and it please you, your opinion of dramatic critics and play reviewers in general, and those who get up books in particular.

Probably the last life story the late Avery Hopwood wrote.
He was drowned at Nice a few weeks later

Selwyn, at the Selwyn Theatre, New York, September 27, 1927.

GEORGE MIDDLETON

If George Middleton were not by nature gentle and forgiving he might easily work up a hate against Paterson, N. J.

Mr. Middleton was born in Paterson in 1880 and left there as soon as his mother could stand the train and ferry trip to New York. Paterson took no notice either of his coming or going.

Thirty years later, after Mr. Middleton had been a playwright for ten years and had achieved some measure of success, he honored Paterson with the first performance of one of his plays. And again both Paterson and its playgoers were positively chilly in their indifference.

Mr. Middleton, however, bears the town not the slightest ill will. If he had to be born again he admits that he might choose another place, taking the transportation into consideration, but otherwise he is quite satisfied.

The years of this playwright's productivity in the theatre began in 1902, when he wrote a play called "The Cavalier" with Paul Kester and it was played by Julia Marlowe. Being 22 and just out of college he was convinced that destiny had selected him to play Favorite Child in one of her major pageants.

The college which had released him that year was Columbia. Before that he had attended a Moravian

boarding school in Nazareth, Pa., and the Dwight prep school in New York.

"The Cavalier," was not as great a success with anyone else as it was with Mr. Middleton, but, as he says, what does that matter? "Success may mean relatively nothing, any more than failure. I love best plays I have published that have never been produced."

After "The Cavalier" Mr. Middleton had two other productions that promised more than they delivered. One was a play called "The Wife's Strategy," which Margaret Anglin did, and the other "The Sinner," offered by Robert Edeson. In the next few years he wrote "The House of a Thousand Candles," "Rosamond at the Red Gate," a play called "The Enemy," another "The Prodigal Judge" and a third "Criminals."

Then, like many other young writers, he took to collaboration, and found that two heads can frequently be better than one. With George Cohan and Guy Bolton he wrote "Hit-the-Trail Halliday," and after this quasi-success he and Bolton found popular favor with both "Polly With a Past" and "Adam and Eva." They tried another, "The Cave Girl," that did not do so well, and then "The Light of the World." This last was a crafty, though reverent, showman's attempt to bring the Passion Play of Oberammergau to New York by fashioning a drama around the players who take part in the Passion Play.

Thus the playwrights introduced a sinning woman to the house of the simple Bavarian woodcarver who had for years played the part of the Christus in the play, had him offer her protection and suffer disgrace

when his best friend, the neighbor who played Simon, thrice refused to speak the truth and acknowledge that he was the father of the child. Simon later came honestly forward and the woodcarver was restored to his part.

The play was elaborately produced by Morris Gest and Ray Comstock but had been tampered with by so many play doctors that both Middleton and Bolton refused at first to attach their names to the program. A Pierre Saisson was the accredited author.

Later, with a somewhat restored text, acknowledgment was made of the real authorship. This confession, however, had no effect on the box office and the drama was shortly withdrawn.

His play royalties having now caused a satisfying bulge in the bank account Mr. Middleton followed his usual custom of running away to Europe. He remained over there for several years, principally in the small towns of France which he adores. He is an enthusiastic traveller and acknowledges an ambition to see everything while his eyesight is still good. As an economic contribution to society he feels that his travelling is justified by the money it puts back into circulation, largely through the medium of guides and waiters.

Knowing that he has had his share of failures, and that his successes were average, I once asked George Middleton if he loved his profession enough to recommend it to another with similar ambitions. I could not ask him whether or not he would let his own son take up playwriting because he has no son. No family, in fact, save Fola La Follette, who married him 17 years

ago and has put up with him ever since. (This he seems to think a record of sorts for Mrs. Middleton.)

I asked him what he thought of playwriting for the comparatively young and he wrote this:

"It is no business for a weak heart. Being in it you should believe nothing but checks, but know that beauty sometimes breaks through. If you're stage struck stick to it: if you're not get out. If pushed on by the creative urge nothing will stop you anyway: if not, realize it is only another game to be beaten."

Mr. Middleton is also kind to critics, considering his adventures with them. At least he is sufficiently non-committal to insist that he does not agree with Nietzsche that "critics are insects who sting to live."

Since he has been back in America Mr. Middleton has seen E. H. Sothern make something of a success of his adaptation of Brieux's "Accused," come fairly close to success with "Blood Money" and written "The Big Pond" with A. E. Thomas.

Mr. Middleton's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Adam & Eva" (with Guy Bolton). Produced by F. Ray Comstock & Morris Gest, at the Longacre Theatre, New York, September 13, 1919.

"The Cave Girl" (with Guy Bolton). Produced by F. Ray Comstock & Morris Gest, at the Longacre Theatre, August 18, 1920.

"The Other Rose" (an adaptation). Produced by David Belasco in association with William Harris Jr., at the Morosco Theatre, New York, December 20, 1923.

"The Road Together." Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Frazee Theatre, New York, January 17, 1924.

"Accused" (an adaptation). Produced by David Belasco, at the Belasco Theatre, New York, September 29, 1925.

"Blood Money" (from a story by H. H. Van Loan). Produced by Mrs. Henry B. Harris, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, August 22, 1927.

"The Big Pond" (with A. E. Thomas). Produced by Knopf & Farnsworth at the Bijou Theatre, New York, August 21, 1928.

THOMPSON BUCHANAN

In the late nineteen hundreds Thompson Buchanan was a reporter on the Louisville Courier-Journal. Idly scanning an early issue of Col. Henry Watterson's favorite newspaper one morning he noticed two stories in adjoining columns. One reported that George Ade, a recently developed playwright, had made $50,000 from a single play. The other told of a city editor who had just been retired with a gold watch after fifty years of faithful service.

Mr. Buchanan read the stories and decided upon a playwriting career. He had a watch.

For the next fifteen years this young playwright was a pretty busy boy around the theatre. His first produced play was a comedy called "A Woman's Way." William A. Brady did it for Grace George. Year by year thereafter, taking dramatizations and plays written on order to fit certain players' needs, or imagined needs, Mr. Buchanan produced "The Intruder," "Mrs. Partner," "Lulu's Husbands," "The Cub," (for Douglas Fairbanks): "The Rock," "The Bridal Path," "Life" and "Daily Bread."

Then he, like so many others, went cinema. He came back from Hollywood in 1919 with the post-war comedy, "Civilian Clothes," and some years later did another comedy called "Sinner," with Claiborne Foster featured. But mostly he has been of late years interested in the pictures, with one eye still cocked hopefully toward Broadway whenever a promising plot shall show itself.

Mr. Buchanan is usually referred to as a Southerner. His own explanation of that is interesting. "I was born in New York City," says he. "That is why I am so humble in the presence of New Yorkers. My father was a low-church Episcopal preacher. When I was six weeks old my high-church grandmother took me to Kentucky so I might be brought up nearer God. Later I sank back to New York."

He went to school in Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Dakota, and Tennessee. "I honored many schools: one year in each school because I was always too proud to repeat a year in the same grade in the same school after failure. Later, with the help of several earnest alumni, I attended the University of the South and graduated honorably in foot-ball and high jumping."

Mr. Buchanan also went back to Kentucky during the war to hitch up with a cavalry outfit. He also told me once that when he joined up for the Spanish American War his Southern-born mother ran him and his blue uniform right out of the house.

Mr. Buchanan's plays produced since 1919 include:

"Civilian Clothes." Produced by Oliver Morosco at the Morosco Theatre, New York, Sept. 12, 1919.

"The Sporting Thing to Do." Produced by Oliver Morosco at the Ritz Theatre, New York, Feb. 19, 1923.

"Pride." Produced by Oliver Morosco at the Morosco Theatre, New York, May 2, 1923.

"Bluffing Bluffers," (with John Meehan). Produced by James P. Beury at the Ambassador Theatre, New York, Dec. 22, 1924.

"Sinner." Produced by Richard Herndon at the Klaw Theatre, New York, Feb. 7, 1927.

EDWARD CHILDS CARPENTER

VERY often the urge for playwriting springs from experiences in totally unrelated occupations. Take Edward Childs Carpenter as an example. His family, hoping that he would follow certain of his more popular kin into the steel or coke business, shipped him to Pittsburg as soon as he was through with the public schools of Philadelphia at 16.

It was soon made evident, however, that Edward Childs was no great help to any business. He was much better at writing things, though none of the uncles could see that that talent was likely ever to do him the least good.

Much of what he wrote took the form of plays and a friend suggested to Edward that if he really wanted to write plays it might not be a bad plan to find out something about the stage. So this young author went out and found himself a job with a stock company.

Despite stage managers, company managers and other prejudiced influences, Mr. Carpenter managed

to keep on acting for the better part of the next two years. During that time he learned a lot, not only about running a stage, but also about the construction of the plays that were a part of the company's repertoire.

When he quit acting and set out seriously to become a dramatist, however, Mr. Carpenter discovered that he did not know nearly so much about writing as he had thought. He took counsel with one of his old school teachers, and as a result was tutored for the next three years in writing. To support himself during this time he became a reporter on a Philadelphia newspaper.

He wrote many plays and finally one called "Captain Courtesy" which was produced by a Morosco stock company in Los Angeles. It ran two weeks and so heartened the young playwright that he promptly took the royalties and got married. Thereafter he turned the play into a novel, and wrote a lot of short stories to keep the house running.

He met John Luther Long, who had written "Madam Butterfly" and helped David Belasco with "The Darling of the Gods," and they worked together on a drama called "The Dragon-Fly." This one went into rather a disastrous tail spin when it was produced.

After that the Carpenter foot edged its way into the producers' door with a play called "The Barber of New Orleans." "The Challenge" and "The Tongues of Men" followed, without definite result. Then came "The Cinderella Man" on which the playwright staked his all. He gave up his newspaper job (he was a financial editor of the Philadelphia Inquirer at the time)

and helped produce the comedy in New York. It was a success and the author has been a hard-working dramatist ever since.

After that "The Pipes of Pan," "The Three Bears," "Bab," a dramatization of Mary Roberts Rinehart's story for Helen Hayes: "Potluck," "Connie Goes Home" and lastly "The Bachelor Father," which ran through the season.

Mr. Carpenter is still an adventurous experimentalist. He has been in three or four producing combinations. One of them staged and made a success of "The Cat and the Canary." Another was the Dramatists, Inc., organization that produced "The Goose Hangs High."

Mr. Carpenter's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Bab." Produced by George Tyler, at the Park Theatre, New York, October 18, 1920.

"Connie Goes Home." Produced by Kilbourn Gordon Inc., at the 49th Street Theatre, New York, September 6, 1923.

"The Bachelor Father." Produced by David Belasco, at the Belasco Theatre, New York, February 28, 1928.

NEW BLOOD—

Being a group of native dramatists who have come to prominence more or less recently and whose achievements promise at least something for their future.

ARTHUR RICHMAN

I AM conscious of a stronger feeling of personal responsibility for the selection of subject matter in this chapter than in most of the others. Being concerned with those playwrights who are comparatively young in theatre experience and whose futures are brighter with promise than their pasts are consistently rich in achievement it is not in every case easy to justify my own confidence in them. And yet the confidence exists.

There has been a definite inflow of new blood into the theatre during the last decade. Veterans have been dropping away one by one, the dependables of ten and a dozen years ago have been slowing up and the demands of the up-and-moving generation of present day play-goers—that it shall be represented in the theatre by plays *of* its own *by* its own—has in many cases borne promising results.

Many of these new writers have had a hand in changing both the spirit and the form of the modern play, not only by making it more free spoken in its dialogue but also truer in its psychology. A few have, as you might say, fired and fallen back. But each of them is strong in potentials.

New York, as a theatre capital, should reasonably be expected to produce occasionally a dramatist of parts. And it does. Arthur Richman is one such and

of comparatively recent emergence. He not only was born in New York, but he has lived in New York all his forty years and has never been away for more than a few weeks at a time.

He cannot, however, either point with pride to or hiss with enthusiasm at any little old brick schoolhouse in the yard of which he whipped, or was whipped by, the school bully. Arthur says he never went to school. Neither the threats of his father nor the insults of his neighbors could induce him to undergo this particular form of what he looked upon as penal servitude.

So they turned him over to a private tutor who visited with him six hours a week for six years without doing his mind any particular harm. Later he decided for himself that he really ought to improve his handwriting and spent months in a business college. Aside from the fact that I have had great difficulty reading that paragraph of his letter containing this information this experience appears to have been most helpful.

Mr. Richman remembers that he took to horse-racing at the age of 11 and followed the ponies as closely as circumstances permitted until he was 15. Although he also remembers that at that time he could have recited the breeding and record of practically every horse running the eastern tracks, his interest was occasionally diverted to the theatre. Someone gave him a toy stage and operating it became a favorite game with him. It made a matinee fiend of him and as soon as he could make family arrangements about going out nights he added evening performances to his schedule.

Going back briefly to the days before racehorses became his passion, Mr. Richman remembers that he was desperately in love with Queenie Vassar at the age of 7, with Mrs. Fiske at the age of 12, and that at 15 he sent flowers to Ethel Barrymore anonymously.

"Marie Dressler was the first actress I ever knew personally," Mr. Richman has written, "and I have liked the theatre from the moment I met her to the present day."

Naturally all this had to result in something and, also naturally, Mr. Richman took to playwriting. He wrote dramas from the time he was 14 until he was 31. Then the Shuberts produced "Not So Long Ago" for him and he was properly thrilled. He also wrote a war play, "The Little Belgian," which was produced in Philadelphia and which he, properly enough, has forgotten.

His output thereafter was consistently high grade and now and then popular with the paying supporters of the theatre. His "Ambush," one of the first fine plays the Theatre Guild did, was too close to home, being set in the lower middleclass circles of New Jersey, to please widely. But he also wrote "The Awful Truth," in which Ina Claire and Bruce MacRae were immediately successful.

By consistent prodding I recently broke through the normal reservations of his mind to discover that he thinks the drama in New York is in a magnificent state artistically but in a precarious state commercially. He likes dramatic critics in a general way, but doesn't boast of it.

He does all his writing in the morning and hopes someday to be a great playwright, just as he also hopes someday to play a good game of golf, to excel at contract bridge, to play fine handball, to take off weight, to make a great deal of money and to see his son grow up and play football.

"I married Madeleine Marshall of East Orange, N. J. in 1925 and my offspring's name is John Marshall Richman," the playwright confides. "I was a second lieutenant, U. S. A., toward the end of the war and spent some time in training camps. I hope there are no more wars for the present."

Mr. Richman was for three terms president of the American Dramatists association and is still a member of the Board of Directors. He is also an honorary vice president of the Authors' League and a member of the council. As a matter of fact he is always being elected to something or other, and the consequent meetings cut terribly into his evenings and his bridge. Still, all this keeps him from worrying about when his newest play is to go into rehearsal, and that is something.

Mr. Richman's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"A Serpent's Tooth." Produced by John Golden, at the Little Theatre, New York, August 24, 1922.

"The Awful Truth." Produced by Charles Frohman, Inc., at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, September 18, 1922.

"The Far Cry." Produced by Robert Milton, at the Cort Theatre, New York, September 30, 1924.

"All Dressed Up." Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Eltinge Theatre, New York, September 9, 1925.

"Antonia" (an adaptation). Produced by Charles Frohman,

Inc., at the Empire Theatre, New York, October 20, 1925. "A Proud Woman." Produced by Edgar Selwyn, at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, November 15, 1926.

ELMER RICE

ELMER RICE is also one of the retiring moderns. Ask him to tell you anything he has done in or for the theatre and he will meet the query with a deprecatory shrug intimating that his contributions are quite unimportant. He sees himself, I think, as a kind of victim of a playwriting passion he cannot successfully resist nor conscientiously approve.

"I enjoy writing plays, but I don't like the theatre," insistently proclaims Mr. Rice. "I shall probably go on writing plays until stopped by an act of God or of the public ememy."

And yet this so reluctant young man had a hand in bringing to a focus one of the most important modifications the art of the dramatist has undergone within the last hundred years.

He helped to wipe out several set and accepted rules of dramaturgy and establish, or at least recreate, an acceptable new constructural form. He wrote "On Trial" and brought over the flash-back of the screen to the stage.

Later he wrote "The Adding Machine," the first and most frequently quoted of impressionistic dramas with a native background and of native authorship.

"The Adding Machine," it should be mentioned in

passing, has been played in both Paris and London, and is now on its way around the world with bids from all playgoing peoples, including the Scandinavian and the Japanese.

Mr. Rice acknowledges, again without boasting, that New York was the scene of his birth (in 1892) and that for twenty-six years following that event he continued to live within two miles of his birthplace. Which fact, if it prove nothing else, proves that the Rices are not as restless as most New Yorkers.

Through the public schools and half-way through high school without, he says, having learned anything that he has found of the slightest value to him, young Mr. Rice was pointed for a business career—"the highest goal of American manhood."

"It took less than a year to demonstrate my ineptitude for business," he wrote to those who were eager to learn something about the author of "The Adding Machine," "so I went in for law. (A step down, but still respectable: if one can't be a business man one can, at least, be a satellite to business men)."

He had five years and a half of law and hated all of them. But he passed his bar examinations and could even now, if he wanted to, stand for appointment to the district attorney's staff or the Federal prohibition enforcement squad.

Having tried business and the law and, to his own mind, having failed in both, Mr. Rice decided that he would become an author. He might have become a bricklayer, he admits, given the requisite mechanical skill, or a policeman if he had been six inches taller and built, as the saying goes, in proportion. He might

have become almost anything with a little urging and a little more equipment. But he decided to become a playwright.

He wrote "On Trial." The story of the theatre curbs at the time was that he wrote the play and brought it to Arthur Hopkins, who made him rewrite parts of it. Being out of funds at the time Mr. Hopkins then turned the manuscript over to Cohan and Harris, retaining but a small interest himself.

"On Trial" begins with a murder trial. The murderer has confessed and would gladly go to his death if he could thereby avoid the further exposure of his motives and the dragging of his wife and child into what is known on most first pages as the pitiless glare of publicity.

The state, however, insists upon appointing counsel to represent him for the orderly procedure of a trial to prove that his confession should be accepted.

An early witness is the wife of the murdered man. She begins the recital of the events leading up to the shooting, the scene blacks out and her testimony is enacted.

Thus succeeding scenes, with succeeding witnesses, carry the story back to the time the murdered man had tricked and ruined the wife of the man who did the murder and results in the prisoner's acquittal.

Sam Forrest, who staged the play for the producers, placed the court scenes on revolving platforms so that they could be quickly moved out of sight.

The opening night of the play resulted in a success so startling to Mr. Rice, it being his first play and he being still no more than a frightened red-headed boy,

that he could barely stand in his place in a box to acknowledge the demonstration following the last act.

"On Trial" afterward served as the inspiration for other flash-back dramas and gave numerous authors and producers the courage to try schemes that were new in the theatre.

As for Mr. Rice, he went in enthusiastically after that for playwriting, but not with great encouragement. His second play, "The Iron Cross," with a German setting, was killed by the war. So, too, I think, was a third play, "The Home of the Free."

Then he wrote "For the Defense," (1919–20), which Richard Bennett played with some little success. He collaborated with Hatcher Hughes on "Wake-up, Jonathan" two seasons later and Mrs. Fiske played it to moderate returns. Meantime he had taken up scenario writing for the Goldwyn Company and spent two years at it.

He dramatized a Hayden Talbot story and called it "It Is the Law" in 1922 and that same season the Theatre Guild played his "Adding Machine," the pathetic story of Mr. Zero who works faithfully as a bookkeeper for twenty-five years, and is fired when the firm puts in an adding machine. In blind rage Zero stabs his boss, is arrested, tried, convicted, executed and goes to heaven. There he is promptly put to work on a gigantic adding machine. The keeper, however, sends his soul back to earth for further seasoning. He is a failure even in heaven.

Another year's wait and Mr. Rice collaborated with Dorothy Parker on a comedy called "Close Harmony." Most of the reviewers were enthusiastic

about this play and could not understand its failure. Later it was sent touring with Otto Kahn footing the bills. At least it was so reported. The title then was changed to "The Lady Next Door." It continued to fail just the same.

Mr. Rice, quite disgusted, fled to Europe. Over there he met Philip Barry. Together they did "one of those mystery things," called it "Cock Robin" and sold it. It ran for several months, long after they had ceased to laugh up their sleeves at thought of it.

Nothing dramatic, Mr. Rice insists, has ever happened to him. Apparently the first night of "On Trial" was, to one in his nerve-frozen state, too dramatic to register. He is not a joiner of clubs and has never taken up golf. But if you insist upon the personal touch he will supply it.

"I am married," says he: "I have red hair, two children, a Corona typewriter and some worthless oil stock."

Mr. Rice's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"For the Defense." Produced by John D. Williams, at the Playhouse, New York, December 19, 1919.

"Wake-up, Jonathan" (with Hatcher Hughes). Produced by Sam H. Harris, at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, January 17, 1921.

"It Is the Law." Produced by Samuel Wallach, at the Ritz Theatre, New York, November 29, 1922.

"The Adding Machine." Produced by the Theatre Guild, at the Garrick Theatre, New York, March 19, 1923.

"Close Harmony" (with Dorothy Parker). Produced by Arthur Hopkins, at the Gaiety Theatre, New York, December 1, 1924.

"The Mongrel" (an adaptation). Produced by Warren P. Munsell, at Longacre Theatre, New York, December 15, 1924.

"Cock-Robin" (with Philip Barry). Produced by Guthrie McClintic, at the 48th Street Theatre, New York, January 12, 1928.

"Street Scene." Produced by Wm. A. Brady, at the Playhouse, New York, January 10, 1929.

JAMES GLEASON

LIKE most of the Jameses, James Gleason probably looks with suspicion upon any person who calls him anything but Jim. Unless it is Jimmy. He being that kind of a fellow. And yet the record is there to prove that he was not only christened James, but James Austin. And that makes it a regular name.

He was twenty when he first turned seriously to the theatre, and had added twenty years to that before he registered as a playwright. Then he produced (with two collaborators) two plays the same season and scored a success with each of them. They were "Is Zat So?" and "The Fall Guy."

James was born to the theatre. His father and mother (Mina Crolius) were troupers when the Boston Museum was a sort of actor shrine, and played many parts in support of the best actors of their day.

James was born in New York city. Ask him and he will tell you proudly that it was at the corner of Tenth Street and Second Avenue, and he has a feeling that

there was much celebrating over the event. Probably because the event was over.

His schooling was obtained from the public schools in those cities in which the Gleasons played their longest engagements, notably New York and San Francisco. But at 16 he decided that he preferred the army as a finishing school. He joined the Second U.S. cavalry and served out his enlistment.

He had many jobs before he took to acting, which, believe it or not, he never cared for greatly. Even to-day he is not particularly keen about it. It is easier, naturally, to act with a success than it is when one failure follows another and the Gleason luck was not very good in the old days. He recalls one season when he played in seven different plays in Atlantic City during their tryout performances and not one of them ever reached Broadway. He was almost forced to write a success for himself if he ever hoped to have one.

His early trouping days, after he was out of the army, were divided between stock company engagements and productions. In Milwaukee he was a favorite, the founder of a local stock, in fact, and it was there that he and Richard Taber, a fellow actor, wrote and first tried the comedy, "Is Zat So?"

"Is Zat So?" was an immediate hit in New York. Gleason played in it, the part of a prize-fighter's manager who, with his charge, takes a job in a Fifth Avenue family to tide him over a financial bare spot and also help his friend, the young son of the family. It was the first of many recent plays that had a prize-fight as a big scene.

That same season Gleason appeared as part author of "The Fall Guy," which he had written with George Abbott when they were both members of a touring company playing "Dulcy."

These two comedies established him as a Broadway playwright. Because both were successful he decided never to write anything but successes. In fact he tells me that he and Bayard Veiller have an organization pledged to that resolve. "Never Write a Failure Association" they call it.

So far Gleason has justified his membership and his pride in it. His third play, of his own authorship, was called "The Shannons of Broadway," and, so long as he and Mrs. Gleason, (Lucille Webster) played in it it was a grand success.

I asked him what he thought of the drama and the theatre, and he answered frankly, in the Gleason manner, that to him they were, as they always had been, largely bunk. They partake, if not of the qualities of baloney, at least of something resembling in general particulars salami, head cheese and bratwurst.

He is proud, however, that his young son, entering his twenties and standing six feet something in practically nothing at all—he is proud that this son is to both write and act and he is willing, as one father to another, to lay a generous wager that this younger Gleason will be heard from.

Mr. Gleason's plays produced since 1919 are:

"Is Zat So?" (with Richard Taber). Produced by Earle Boothe, at the 39th Street Theatre, New York, January 5, 1925.

"The Fall Guy" (with George Abbott). Produced by the Messrs. Shubert, in association with George B. McLellan, at the Eltinge Theatre, New York, March 10, 1925.

"The Shannons of Broadway." Produced by Crosby Gaige and Earle Boothe, at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York, September 26, 1927.

"Rain or Shine" (with Maurice Marks). Produced by A. L. Jones and Morris Green, at the George M. Cohan Theatre, New York, February 9, 1928.

LAURENCE STALLINGS

One thing does lead to another. There is practically no denying that fact.

If, for instance, Laurence Stallings had not been given an assignment to write a newspaper story about the manner in which the U. S. Marines were conducting their recruiting campaign in Atlanta, Ga., in 1917, there would never have been a play written in 1924 called "What Price Glory?"

And if there had never been a "What Price Glory?" much of the progress the stage has made within the last several years might not have been made. "What Price Glory?" was free with its profanities and bold in its exposures of human nature under excessive strain. Many are not yet agreed that it served the theatre well in breaking down traditional safeguards that had been thrown around such stage conventions. But those who have had close contact with the artificial theatre the last two decades were soon convinced that the

arrival of the Stallings-Anderson drama was a great and lasting help, as I have previously noted in Mr. Anderson's chapter.

Stallings is a Southerner by birth and by education. He went to school in his home town of Macon, Ga., and took his A.B. at the Lake Forest College in North Carolina. When he went in for reporting he got a job on the Atlanta Journal, and it was for that paper that he undertook to write the yarn about the Leathernecks.

The contact with the army was too much for him in those exciting days. Many of the Stallings men had been military figures in the past and almost before he knew it he had signed up for five years as a Marine. Then he went back to his paper, wrote the story and resigned.

Ten months later he took a competitive examination for a commission and won his second lieutenantcy. He went to France with the Fifth Marines, had ten months of service as a second lieutenant and one month as a first lieutenant. He was in command of his company at Belleau Wood, was severely wounded and was in hospital for five days before he was sufficiently recovered to be told that he had been made a captain. Thereafter he went through an additional touch of hell by being kept in hospital eight months in France and two years in the United States. The amputation of a leg saved his life.

He went back to school as soon as he was out of hospital and took a Master of Science degree at Georgetown University, at Washington, D. C. For awhile he taught in that college, and then harkened

again to the newspaper call. He went to work on the Washington Times, where his stuff came to the attention of the editors of the New York World. Brought to New York he did theatre reporting for awhile and finally decided to specialize in book reviewing.

His contacts with the theatre put the play that became "What Price Glory?" in his mind. Maxwell Anderson, editorial writer, was also interested in the theatre and the two, as elsewhere recorded, agreed to do the war play together.

There was a story at the time that the sale of this play to Arthur Hopkins came about through the interest of Alexander Woollcott, at the time dramatic critic of the World. In casual conversation he mentioned to Mr. Hopkins the discouraging delays a playwright usually faces in submitting a play, however good it might be. Many times such manuscripts had been known to kick around producers' offices for months.

The possibility of such a thing happening to the Stallings-Anderson script, which Woollcott had read, was mentioned. Hopkins promptly agreed to prove just how unregular he was as a producer. Let him have the play three days and he agreed to have it read and his decision made.

Managers as well as office boys some times make good. Arthur took the play Saturday, as promised, read it Sunday, also as promised, and bought it Monday, as hoped for. The rest is history already told. Thereafter Mr. Stallings collaborated with Mr. Anderson on "The First Flight" and "The Buc-

caneer," and then went to the coast to make a scenario of "What Price Glory?" He disagreed with the picture's promoters, so the story came floating back to us, as to what he should and should not do with that scenario, and finally he gave it up and wrote "The Big Parade" instead.

Since then he has been doing more or less free lance work, in pictures and out, and has the libretto of a musical piece called "Rainbow" to his credit. At least, I assume, he wrote it first and then Oscar Hammerstein 2nd brought it closer to Broadway. Mr. Stallings also wrote the war novel "Plumes," and has done a good many magazine stories.

Mr. Stalling's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"First Flight" (with Maxwell Anderson). Produced by Arthur Hopkins, at the Plymouth Theatre, New York, September 17, 1925.

"The Buccaneer" (with Maxwell Anderson). Produced by Arthur Hopkins, at the Plymouth Theatre, New York, October 2, 1925.

"Deep River" (an opera, music by Frank Harling). Produced by Arthur Hopkins, at the Imperial Theatre, New York, October 4, 1926.

JOHN COLTON

JOHN COLTON burst rather suddenly and quite brilliantly upon the theatre world of New York in November, 1922. That was the date of the production of a drama called "Rain," the authorship of which he had

shared with Clemence Randolph. "Rain" not only proved the outstanding success of that season, but continued with unabated popularity for the next four years.

The advent of a new and successful playwright invariably inspires a train of investigation. Eight million working playwrights, amateur and semi-amateur, and all their hopeful kin want to know immediately how he did it. Upon what meat did this particular Caesar feed that he suddenly should grow so great?

Both Mr. Colton's experience and his background are interestingly unconventional. His life has been colorful, exciting, and adventurous. I think I shall let him tell of it himself. "At the trying age of five and a half weeks," he wrote me, when I asked him about it, "I was taken to the land of Japan by my parents. My first shock that registered was therefore of an Oriental nature. At a tender age I accompanied my father on various journeys through India, China and Japan in his capacity of curio buyer for the then well known firm of Vantine and Company.

"By the time I was seven I knew Ming from Swatow and Kinkozan from Satsuma. At the age of eight I saw my first drama—'The Legend of the Forty Seven Ronin,' as interpreted by the Imperial Players of His Majesty's Theatre at Tokyo. About this time I also made the acquaintance of the art of Mme. Sada Yacco, the Japanese Bernhardt, in 'Sapho' and 'Othello.'

"Somewhat later my youthful fixation had as its object that abundant, blonde touring Australian star, Miss Hattie Lessingham in 'The Second Mrs. Tanquery' and 'Camille.' To Miss Lessingham and her

periodical visits to Yokohama I was completely faithful until along about 1905, when I saw Beerbohm Tree and Lena Ashwell in London in 'The Darling of the Gods.' This visit to the theatre decided my career.

"I have been writing plays off and on ever since. The following year I beheld Mrs. Leslie Carter in 'Adrea' and vowed a fourteen year old vow. I would one day write that lovely lady a play.

"Meanwhile my schooling had of necessity been somewhat erratic. I had attended a dames' school in Yokohama, and later a boys' school conducted by a former headmaster of Harrow who had impressed me with the belief that words have souls. He had assured me that I would either become a poet or a rogue. He was both—but a remarkable man. Between trips back and forth to the Orient and intervals of harassing tutors, there were bits of schooling in France and England, and a few consecutively terrible years of public schools in New York. Somewhat to the surprise of my mentors who had me registered in the Grade C moron class, with annoying Oriental trimmings, I managed to enter Columbia College with various conditions, remaining mysteriously two years—and how!

"At the end of which time, in the language of Mr. Norman Douglas, 'I went'—I went westerly and had a grand time bumming. Followed pleasant, mischievous, scampering years on a ranch—on various newspapers—a few short stories sold—in 1912 a play produced in stock in Minneapolis—the war with its attendant holes in everyone's career—then back in New York—more stories sold—job in California in the movies—

the writing of a play called 'Drifting'—a meeting with Maugham and the resultant 'Rain.' 'The Shanghai Gesture' and back again to the sanctuary of the movies.

"Other plays I hope to write, of course, but I intend to take my time about it. Being incorrigibly lazy and believing with Clara, the hussy, that 'work takes the heart out o' one,' I trust I may end my days doing nothing much of anything. No longer do I apologize to myself and try to disguise the fact that I have the soul of a beach comber."

Stories of the seeming accidents by which great, or at least abnormally successful, plays come to be written have always been fascinating to me. That contained in the history of "Rain" is especially so.

It was while he was in California doing scenario work, as Mr. Colton relates, that he met W. Somerset Maugham, the English dramatist. They were stopping at the same hotel. Late one night Colton, ready to retire and having nothing to read, wandered into Maugham's room in search of a book. Maugham had nothing Colton had not already read except the proof sheets of a series of his short stories that were to be included in a volume entitled "The Trembling of a Leaf." These proofs had that day come back from Doran, the publisher, for final revision, and in lieu of anything else Colton took them to read himself to sleep.

He had gone through several when he came upon the one called "Miss Thompson." Reading it he found that its gripping realism had startled him into a state of complete wakefulness. Next day he told Maugham that he was sure there was a play in "Miss

Thompson." The author admitted there might be, but declared that he had neither the time nor the inclination to search it out. He was eager to get away from Hollywood for a vacation in Sumatra. If Mr. Colton thought there was a play there, said Mr. Maugham, he could work it out and good luck to him.

A few weeks later Colton returned to New York and discussed the possibilities of the play with several friends. One of them was Clemence Randolph, also a scenario writer. She, too, became enthused and they agreed to work the plot out together.

Their first draft was sketchily written in lead pencil on yellow copy sheets. These Colton showed to John Williams, for many years a close associate of the late Charles Frohman and still interested in play production. Williams, who was already familiar with the story of "Miss Thompson" from its publication in the Smart Set magazine, was quick to notice that not only was this the beginning of an interesting drama, but that Colton had also created a new character in the person of Handsome O'Hara, the marine, and by so doing had given the play a romantic flare that the story had not possessed.

Colton and Miss Randolph continued to work on the play until it was completed. Williams then undertook its production, offering a financial interest in it to many managers. None could see its possibilities. Dealing frankly with the adventures of a prostitute they believed the play much too bold to pass the unwritten censorship of the theatre, or to miss offending playgoers even if it were passed by the authorities.

Eventually Williams made a deal with Sam H.

Harris whereby Harris was to take over the play, cast Jeanne Eagels for the Sadie Thompson part and pay Williams 25 per cent of the gross receipts. Thus did "Rain" finally reach production in Philadelphia, where not much attention was paid to it by the public. Its record-breaking history began the night it was produced at the Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York.

Since then, as he has written, Mr. Colton has produced "The Shanghai Gesture." He also adapted from the Hungarian a drama called "The Devil's Plum Tree," but this, tried in San Francisco and Los Angeles, did not promise well enough to be brought east.

Mr. Colton is blessed with a practical working philosophy. "I expect nothing from people," he says, "and am rarely disappointed. I am prone, it is true to be somewhat intolerant of intolerants—prohibitionists, reformers and holy folk in general—but these, too, I try to see only as poor wretches bound also to the wheel!

"My religion is a mixture of evolution, astronomy and the eighteenth dimension. I think none of us are of particular importance except to ourselves. I have a horror of heavens, Utopias and what is happening in Russia. The ant, the bee are frozen perfection so far as Nature is concerned, but I want to be neither. Evil I look upon as quite as important to humanity as Good —but I haven't the remotest idea what either is."

Mr. Colton's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Rain" (with Clemence Randolph). Produced by Sam H.

Harris, at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, November 7, 1922.

"The Shanghai Gesture." Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York, February 1, 1926.

LULA VOLLMER

LULA VOLLMER (she was christened Louisa Smith Vollmer but rebelled as soon as she heard about it and insisted upon calling herself Lula) is another playwright who achieved a success with her first produced play, "Sun-up," (1922–23) that was of such promise that she has been confidently looked to for bigger and better plays and will probably yet achieve them.

Miss Vollmer was twenty years old before she knew much of the theatre, even as a fascinated spectator. She was born in a lumber camp called Keyser, in North Carolina, her father being a lumberman, and she was carried as an infant to another lumber camp and then another.

When she was eight she was sent to boarding school. Then, as she recites ruefully, "to several other boarding schools," and finally to the Normal and Collegiate Institute at Asheville, N. C.

In boarding school she declared an intention of becoming a writer of stories and was frequently in trouble with her teachers because she wasted her study hours in developing her talents in this direction.

She learned about plays from reading Shakespeare and Ibsen. She tried to write plays, and many of these were produced in the school gymnasium. Her first comedy made use of members of the faculty as charac-

ters and was highly successful—with the students.

In 1918 Miss Vollmer came to New York. America was going to war. Her friends from the South brought her many stories of the reactions of the Carolina mountain folk to the draft. The stories inspired her to write "Sun-up." It took her but two weeks to get the play on paper but she spent the next five years in search of a producer. During that time she worked as a box-office executive for the Theatre Guild.

"Sun-up," produced obscurely in the Provincetown Playhouse deep in New York's Greenwich village, had the unusual experience of hanging on and on despite the scant attention paid it by the professional playgoers. Produced in the spring it ran through the summer, was transferred to another small theatre in Seventy-eighth Street, ran there for many weeks, attracted the attention of Lee Shubert and was then moved into the theatre district, where it continued at the Princess through the following season. Later it achieved a success in London and in 1927–28 was brought back and revived in the Princess Theatre, renamed the LaVerne, after the actress, Lucille La Verne, who has won an outstanding personal success playing its leading character, that of the Widow Cagle.

The Widow Cagle is a mountain woman who knows nothing of war, save that which the moonshiners wage continuously against the revenuers and the war against the Yanks that was fought down Asheville way when she was a girl. When her son Rufe is drafted she rebells and would take the law against all authority into her own hands by way of reprisal.

When news comes that Rufe has been killed in France and she discovers that a boy she has been harboring as a deserter from a soldier camp is also the son of the man who had killed her husband, she determines to take sweet revenge by killing him.

As she raises her gun she hears the voice of her dead son telling her that hate is the cause of all war, and that love alone will save mankind. She lowers the gun and is content to live the rest of her days in peace.

After "Sun-up" Miss Vollmer wrote "The Shame Woman," "The Dunce Boy," and "Trigger." These were produced and received with friendly words but not with the hoped for financial support.

Miss Vollmer's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Sun-Up." Produced by Players' Co. Inc., at the Provincetown Theatre, New York, May 25, 1923.

"The Dunce Boy." Produced by the Art Theatre, at Daly's Theatre, New York, April 1, 1925.

"Trigger." Produced by Richard Herndon, at the Little Theatre, New York, December 6, 1927.

VINCENT LAWRENCE

VINCENT LAWRENCE has come as near success as any of his fellows and taken his failure to win success more philosophically than most of them. He still is buoyed by a sustaining hope and is without bitterness, even toward the critics who have been niggardly with their praise and often free with unkindly comment.

"I have no quarrel with critics," he has said. "I've

tried to fool 'em a lot of times, but they're too smart."

He feels the same way about audiences. "All you need is a good play about anything," says he. "An audience is an idiotic genius. Separately each one may know nothing, but banded together their instinct is perfect."

Born in Roxbury, Mass., thirty-eight years ago, Lawrence went through the public schools and finally got to Andover on his way to Yale. He believes he is entitled to at least one Andover record. He entered the third class and came out in the fourth.

And yet it was at Andover that his ambition as a writer of stories was first stimulated. He did one piece his professor liked well enough to keep him after class and ask him where he got the idea. It was his spelling, he thinks, that beat him.

His produced plays most likely to be remembered by readers of this book are "In Love With Love," "Two Married Men," "Spring Fever," and "Sour Grapes."

Most of these were received favorably by the reviewers. "In Love With Love" was popular, "Spring Fever" had a fair run, "Sour Grapes," which Alice Brady played, was almost a great play in the estimation of the experts, but failed to realize the promise of his early acts.

His other plays include "The Girl Outside," "The Ghost Between," "Two Fellows and a Girl" and "Among the Married" and "A Distant Drum."

Mr. Lawrence is married, is proud of his three children and haunted by the fear that his wife often wishes she had married a clerk. Not, I have reason to believe

from recent investigations, an uncommon state of mind on the part of playwrights' wives.

Mr. Lawrence's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"The Ghost Between." Produced at the 39th Street Theatre, New York, March 22, 1921.
"Two Married Men." Produced by William Harris, at the Longacre Theatre, New York, January 13, 1925.
"Spring Fever." Produced by A. H. Woods, at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, August 3, 1925.
"Sour Grapes." Produced by William Harris, at the Longacre Theatre, New York, Sept. 6, 1926.
"Happy" (with McElbert Moore). Produced by Murray Phillips, at the Earl Carroll Theatre, December 5, 1927.
"A Distant Drum." Produced by William Harris, Jr., at the Hudson Theatre, New York, January 20, 1928.
"In Love with Love." Revived by Joseph E. Shea, at the Cosmopolitan Theatre, New York, May 14, 1928.

LEWIS BEACH

You may have some slight difficulty in quickly recalling the name of Lewis Beach—or Emmet Lewis Beach Jr., to give him the name his family gave him. He has, so far as the legitimate theatre is concerned, been represented the last several seasons only by the recent production of a comedy called "Merry Andrew."

But I remember him as the author of one of the first and, I think, one of the best of the plays devoted to the problems of the younger generation. This was the frankly sentimental comedy called "The Goose Hangs High" in which a trio of moderately high-flying and

tradition-ignoring youngsters responded nobly to their hereditary tendencies and their earlier family training in a family crisis.

A second reason for recalling this drama and this dramatist is that the production of "The Goose Hangs High" in 1924 ushered in one of those frequent combinations of playwrights who turn producers with an idea of establishing their freedom from domination by the commercial managers.

The Dramatists' Theatre, Inc., this one was duly christened. The organizers were Edward Childs Carpenter, Owen Davis, James Forbes, Arthur Richman and Cosmo Hamilton. Their choice of a play by an outsider as their first production was, they were proud to point out, an earnest of their most honorable and unselfish intentions.

They started, too, with a success. Mr. Carpenter managed it and Mr. Forbes directed the rehearsals. But before the year was old inharmony had edged in somewhere and the enterprise was shortly abandoned.

"The Goose Hangs High" was not the first of Mr. Beach's plays to reach production. Quite a little attention had been paid a one-act drama of his called "The Clod" when the earlier Washington Square players included it in one of their bills.

He also was represented in 1922–23 by the production of "A Square Peg," one of those homely domestic tragedies that strike much too close to the American home to be enjoyed by the American home sufferers.

This was the story of a dominating mother who, without ever being conscious of it, drove her children into all sorts of defensive misdemeanors by her con-

stant nagging and finally saw her husband hang himself rather than let her pay off his defalcations at the bank and thus keep him out of jail. He had rather hungered for a nice quiet jail.

Mr. Beach is also the author of a play called "Ann Vroome" which probably holds some sort of record for having been announced by more managers for immediate production than any play of its time and class. It is, so far as I know, still unproduced. Recently a comedy of his called "Merry Andrew" was produced.

Mr. Beach was born in Saginaw, Mich., made Harvard after the usual prep school preliminaries, annexed an A.B. and an A.M. and wrote a play called "Let's Get Married" while he was there. The piece was produced by Harvard actors and published by Walter Baker & Co., which set the young man up considerably at the time. Of late seasons he, too, has been feeding the ravenous movies.

Mr. Beach's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"A Square Peg." Produced by Guthrie McClintic, at the Punch & Judy Theatre, New York, January 27, 1923.

"The Goose Hangs High." Produced by the Dramatists' Theatre Inc., at the Bijou Theatre, New York, January 29, 1924.

"Merry Andrew." Produced by Lawrence Rivers Inc., at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, Jan. 21, 1929.

THE NUGENTS

BROADWAY, New York, and the play reporters thereof did not know a great deal about the Nugent family

prior to 1922. They were, by the record, show folk and they had been playing in vaudeville for two or three generations. But so far as the legitimate theatre was concerned they were little more than a name.

In May, 1922, a Nugent comedy was produced at the Belmont Theatre in New York. "Kempy" was its title. The cast was full of Nugents and Nugent kin folk and so was the audience. The authors were J. C. Nugent and Elliott, his son. It was late in the season, the weather was beginning to thicken and "Kempy" was just another show.

At the end of the first act it was interesting to see the audience and particularly the play reporters snap to attention. Another five minutes and the lobby was abuzz with the queries of excited young men seeking to augment their slight knowledge of the play's authors and principal actors. The Nugents and "Kempy" were a hit.

This was the first play, it transpired, that J. C. and Elliott had jointly fathered. J. C. had been writing for the theatre all his life, starting with a piece in 1888 called "The Spanish Student" and achieving notice in 1900 with one called "An Indiana Romance." There were also many one-act plays that the Nugent family had presented in the vaudeville theatres.

After "Kempy," which ran through the summer and over into the next season, the Nugents produced other plays—"A Clean Town," "The Rising Son," "The Trouper," "The Poor Nut," (in which Elliott also won a success as the track team hero) : "The Breaks" and "By Request." None of these quite lived up to the

promise of "Kempy," though "The Poor Nut" was a bigger box office success and "By Request" has something of the same homely charm.

"Kempy" may be recalled as the story of a young architect temporarily forced to take a job as a plumber's assistant. He is called to mend a pipe-break in the home of a lady novelist who has just quarreled with her intensely practical sweetheart. Kempy, the plumber, has read the young woman's novel, and she, grasping at his sympathetic understanding, decides to marry him and thus be even with her fiance. Before the boy knows what is really happening he has been dragged before a magistrate and made a husband.

The ceremony is sobering to the young contracting parties and until they are fully cognizant of what it may mean to their future it is decided that Kempy shall occupy the guest room. He prefers, however, if his bride doesn't mind, to sleep on the living room davenport with the dog. The play's complications are eventually smoothed out by the girl's fiance, a lawyer, and the marriage is annulled.

The Nugents are an Ohio family, J. C. having been born in Miles, O. in the middle seventies and Elliott in Dover, O., twenty-five years later. J. C's. schooling was patchy but Elliott went from high-school to Ohio State university and graduated. J. C. took to the stage when he was 18 and Elliott has kept in touch with it all his life, taking it up as enthusiastically as a young man as soon as he was out of college.

They are representative of their respective generations. J. C. admits a fond memory of J. B. Booth, George S. Knight and William Gillette, and Elliott's

early favorites were the Barrymores, Johnstone Forbes-Robertson and Julia Marlowe.

When they are both playing and writing plays, which is to say most of the time, they work two or three hours a day three or four days a week. And yet, J. C. admits, they are still popular with the family. Which goes to prove that playwrights should make a point of marrying in the profession.

Plays by J. C. and Elliott Nugent produced since 1919 include:

"Kempy." Produced by Richard Herndon, at the Belmont Theatre, New York, May 15, 1922.
"Dumb-Bell," Produced by Richard Herndon, at the Belmont Theatre, New York, November 26, 1923.
"The Rising Son." Produced by Marc Klaw, Inc., at the Klaw Theatre, October 27, 1924.
"The Poor Nut." Produced by Patterson McNutt, at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, April 27, 1925.
"Human Nature." Produced by Gene Buck, at the Liberty Theatre, New York, September 24, 1925.
"The Trouper." Produced by The Playshop Inc., at the 52nd Street Theatre, New York, March 8, 1926.
"Nightstick" (with John Wray and Elaine Carrington). Produced by Crosby Caige, at the Selwyn Theatre, New York, November 10, 1927.
"The Breaks." Produced by Richard Herndon, at the Klaw Theatre, New York, April 16, 1928.

MAURINE WATKINS

It was in 1926 that Maurine Watkins came out of the nowhere into the know, or more specifically out of the

amateur playwriting ranks into the Broadway glare that beats upon the crowns of successful professionals. She brought the satiric comedy, "Chicago," with her.

Immediately following the success of that play, a success the report of which spread overnight the length and breadth of the Metropolitan area, Miss Watkins was, if not inundated, at least generously sprinkled with offers to do more and more plays. She accepted but one of these commissions. That was to make a drama from such material as she found usable in Samuel Hopkins Adams' "Revelry."

"Revelry" you may recall as Mr. Adams' camouflaged political novel which the world accepted generally as an expose of the later years of Warren Harding's life. It was supposed to reveal circumstances and conditions that led directly to his death.

Miss Watkins turned out a thoroughly workmanlike job as an adapter and the production of the play was competent, but the American playgoer, even the playgoer whose Americanism has been diluted by long residence in New York, is fussy about liberties taken with the lives of his country's executives. Even an organized ballyhoo failed to stir his interest in "Revelry" and the play was withdrawn after forty-eight performances.

Miss Watkins, I assume, thereupon retired into the silences to compose other and better dramas. That she may emerge with one sufficiently impressive to gain production before this volume reaches the printer is entirely within the possibilities.

Maurine Dallas Watkins is the full name, as recorded in the Louisville, Ky., records at date of birth.

Shortly thereafter, when Miss Watkins was three years old, the family moved to Indiana and settled for a considerable stay. Miss Watkins went to school in Crawfordsville, and later to Hamilton College in the old home town of Louisville. Back thence to Indiana and Butler College, thence to Radcliffe and finally to Yale for a session with George Pierce Baker of the drama division.

It was while she was at Radcliffe that she became interested in playwriting, particularly in playwriting for the late Leo Ditrichstein, who was at the moment her favorite actor. Mr. Ditrichstein was so well pleased with the play she submitted to him that he paid her $500 advance royalties on it. Later he induced her to go to Chicago and work with him on a Vajda adaptation he had in mind, which she did. That was in 1924.

At the close of Mr. Ditrichstein's Chicago engagement, and when she had her own trunks packed for a return to Indianapolis, Miss Watkins decided that she needed more experience and a closer contact with life. She applied for a position as reporter on the Chicago Tribune, got the job and for the next several months did a series of general assignments.

Several of these took her into the criminal courts. There she gathered her material for the play "Chicago." Convinced now that she needed more knowledge of the technique of playwriting she left the Tribune, came east and entered Professor Baker's class. It was as part of her class work that she made the first draft of "Chicago."

When she brought the script to New York her experience was quite different from that of most ama-

teurs. She sold it to the first play-broker to whom she submitted it, who in turn sold an interest in it to two other producers. The first performance, as previously stated, was a complete success.

Miss Watkins is thorough and earnest. She described "Chicago" on one occasion as "an honest attempt to say something I believed terrifically," and she was quite stunned by the play's success.

She was also a trifle startled, I suspect, at certain of the more profane sections of the dialogue. In her script, they tell me, the playwright left blank spaces for the injection of such curses as seemed natural and relevant. Either she did not know the words or she wished to avoid giving offense to her typist. A nice touch either way. The men who staged her play for her supplied the swear words with great enthusiasm.

Miss Watkins's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Chicago." Produced by Sam H. Harris, at the Music Box Theatre, New York, December 30, 1926.

"Revelry." Produced by Robert Milton, at the Masque Theatre, New York, September 12, 1927.

GILBERT EMERY

GILBERT EMERY stepped forward as a dramatist of conspicuous promise in the spring of 1921 when the producer, Sam H. Harris offered at a series of special matinees his first play, "The Hero."

Mr. Harris's timidity, which prompted the mati-

nees, was induced largely because he was not sure of the public's reaction to a war play denied the glamour and heroics of a war hero so soon after the conflict. So great was the enthusiasm of those who saw the play, however, that Mr. Harris withdrew it and held it for production the following season.

In the fall Richard Bennett headed the company and the matinee cast was otherwise theoretically strengthened. But, as Mr. Harris feared, playgoers did not take kindly to the story of a boy who was a hero at the front but a rotter at home. The play was withdrawn after eighty performances.

Thereafter Mr. Emery made a dramatization of the novel "Queed," wrote the play "Tarnish," which had something of the same fine quality of "The Hero" and ran the better part of a season: "Episode," which missed: "The Handkerchief," and "Love in a Mist," which he wrote with Amelie Rives and which was played with some success by Madge Kennedy and Sidney Blackmer.

Before he tried his hand at playwriting (and also playacting, at which, incidentally, he is often quite good) Mr. Emery wrote stories under his family name of Pottle—Emery Pottle. He was born in Naples, N. Y., had his later schooling at the Oneonta Normal school and Amherst College. He has a novel, "Handicapped," a book of poems and any number of short stories to his credit.

Mr. Emery's plays produced since 1919 are:

"The Hero." Produced by Sam H. Harris, at the Longacre Theatre, New York, March 14, 1921.

"Tarnish." Produced by John Cromwell Inc., at the Belmont Theatre, New York, October 1, 1923.

"Episode." Produced by Lee Shubert, at the Bijou Theatre, New York, February 4, 1925.

"Love in a Mist." Produced by Charles L. Wagner, at the Gaiety Theatre, New York, April 12, 1926.

PATRICK KEARNEY

PATRICK KEARNEY (which patronymic he politely requests should be pronounced phonetically) established his right to be considered a possibility among the oncoming dramatists with a play entitled "A Man's Man" produced in 1925–26. An incisively observant study of middle-class life and character the play was a bit too close to unpleasant realities to interest a large public, but it brought Kearney a commission to dramatize Theodore Dreiser's "An American Tragedy," which was later credited with being another promising job.

As far back as 1917 Kearney sold a play to the Washington Square Players entitled "The Murder of Marat," and in 1920, when he was working in the moving picture country, his "Tongues of Fire" was produced in Los Angeles. He has written a number of one-act plays and innumerable scenarios.

Mr. Kearney is a native of Delaware, Ohio, went to school in Columbus, and graduated from the Ohio State University in 1915. He has been mostly in New York since then. He had some hope of being a magician but was gradually weaned away and finally took naturally to writing. He has been a newspaper man, a

writer of advertising copy, a contributor to many of the smarter magazines and once or twice he has helped the actors out by taking a small part in this or that production.

Mr. Kearney's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"A Man's Man." Produced by the Stagers, at the 52nd Street Theatre, New York, October 13, 1925.

"An American Tragedy" (from the novel of Theodore Dreiser). Produced by Horace Liveright, at the Longacre Theatre, New York, October, 11, 1926.

KENYON NICHOLSON

KENYON NICHOLSON came forward a season or two ago to prove that because a man teaches the writing of plays in college it does not follow that he cannot write one himself. He produced "The Barker" and "The Barker" made him one of the most successful of the season's dramatists. It was a story of the characters found in street carnivals which Mr. Nicholson gathered by the comparatively simple method of travelling with a street carnival.

Otherwise his career as a playwright is still in the formative stage. Some years ago he wrote a play with Meredith Nicholson which was called "Honor Bright." This was produced by Stuart Walker in Indianapolis. Since "The Barker" he has written "Love Is Like That" with S. N. Behrman, and "Eva the Fifth." Both have been produced, but neither proved popular.

Mr. Nicholson, just now galloping into his early thirties, is an Indianian. His schooling included sessions at the DeWitt Clinton High School in New York, Wabash College in Indiana, Cambridge University in England and back to Columbia University in New York, where between plays he now teaches others how to write them. At least he gives them the general idea.

Mr. Nicholson's plays produced since 1919 include:

"The Barker." Produced by Charles L. Wagner in association with Edgar Selwyn, at the Biltmore Theatre, New York, January 18, 1927.

"Love is Like That" (with S. N. Behrman). Produced by A. L. Jones and Morris Green, at the Cort Theatre, April 18, 1927.

"Eva the Fifth." Produced by John Golden, at the Little Theatre, New York, August 28, 1928.

HARRY WAGSTAFF GRIBBLE

HARRY WAGSTAFF GRIBBLE'S reputation as a promising playwright has rested for many years on a comedy called "March Hares." Recently he bulwarked that suggestion of promise by writing a serious drama of religious intolerance in the home of a minister. It was called "Revolt." As he is still under 40 and a hard worker there is hope for him.

His other plays include "The Outrageous Mrs. Palmer" and "Messr. Marco Polo," and he has a long list of musical play librettos to his credit, including the first two "Artist and Model" revues.

Gribble was born in England at Seven Oaks, Kent. He attended Clarence school and later Emmanuel College and Cambridge University. He started his working life as a clerk, got as far as Handel's "Largo" on his way to fulfilling an ambition to become an organist and went in finally for playwriting.

Mr. Gribble's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"The Outrageous Mrs. Palmer." Produced by Messrs. Shubert, at the 39th Street Theatre, New York, October 12, 1920.

"Mister Romeo" (with Wallach A. Manheimer). Produced by Murray Phillips, at Wallack's Theatre, New York, September 5, 1927.

"Revolt." Produced by William Powell, at the Vanderbilt Theatre, October 31, 1928.

NOVELISTS AND THE DRAMA—

Being an account of the experience of several American novelists who tried to turn their talents to playwriting and whose success was varied, but interesting.

BOOTH TARKINGTON

NOVEL writing and playwriting do not often go hand in hand. Many people think they should. Many others wonder why they should not. To the layman a good story teller is a good story teller and should be able to apply his gifts to any form of written expression.

And yet few novelists of standing have also achieved a first class success as playwrights, and practically no great playwrights have ever been able to turn successfully to novel writing.

Novelists admit that they find any kind of playwriting exceedingly difficult and often quite impossible. And most playwrights confess that their few abortive attempts to put their plots into novels have proved utterly discouraging and usually disastrous. Galsworthy, despite a success or two on the stage, remains essentially a novelist. Barrie, turned playwright finally, is the one writer of books who probably will be longest remembered by the last generation as a writer of plays.

Yet most novelists try playwriting at one time or another. Frequently they work with practiced playwrights as collaborators and often they succeed in producing successful plays.

Newton Booth Tarkington, the leader of our American men of letters, who shortened his name by eliminating the Newton years ago, has a dozen or more plays to his credit. His "Man from Home," for example, written in collaboration with Harry Leon Wil-

son, was a popular success for three or four seasons. His "Penrod" stories put into play form earned him royalties and a new public. His "Clarence" was a season's favorite. And there were several other Tarkington plays that were carried to some sort of success either by reason of their intrinsic merit as stage entertainment or through the popularity of the stars who played them.

But more frequently than otherwise Mr. Tarkington, after a half-hearted and usually discouraging experience with a play, turned back to novel writing with expressed relief and great personal satisfaction.

His first play, older playgoers will recall, was "Beaucaire," (1901) which with Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland's help, he wrote for Richard Mansfield. I asked him what he thought of it.

"I wondered if it was as bad as Mansfield said it was," he replied, and added, laconically, "It was."

He did not do another drama for six years, when he wrote "The Man from Home" with Mr. Wilson. I recall that at the first performance of this play in Chicago the authors sat with the audience and suffered torture. They thought the laughing was at them and not at their play.

Afterward there followed in more or less orderly progression "Cameo Kirby," "The Gentleman from Indiana," "Your Humble Servant," "Springtime," "Getting a Polish," "Mister Antonio," "The Country Cousin" (with Julian Street): "The Gibson Upright," "Up from Nowhere," "Clarence," "Poldekin," "The Wren," "Intimate Strangers," (written for Maude Adams' expected return to the stage and played by

Name, and the fullness thereof.... Newton Booth Tarkington

Age, and the correctness thereof--shall we say approximately? Born 1869

Birthplace and when escape therefrom was successfully accomplished, if ever.... Indianapolis Indiana - Still here

Schooldays, and thence to what seat of learning? Public schools, High School. Lawrence. Princeton

Early inclinations toward work, if any.....

None

Early inclinations toward the drama, if any.....

Would recite, at 10, "How is the winter of our discontent", if let.

Your first play..... "The Death of Jesse James" - 1882.

Your other plays..... (some with collaborators, some [illegible] "Beaucaire", "The Gentleman from Indiana", "The Man from Home", "Cameo Kirby", "Springtime", "If I Had Money", "The Man in Home's Back", "Foreign Exchange", "Your Humble Servant", "Mister Antonio", "Clarence", "Magnolia", "Polly", "Tweedles", "[illegible]", "The Prodigal", "The Rose", "[illegible]", "The Trusting [illegible]", "[illegible]", "[illegible]", "[illegible]", "[illegible]", etc.

Your first production..... "Beaucaire"

Your first success and what did you think of it..... "Beaucaire" - Wondered if it was [illegible] [illegible] played it) [illegible] it was.

Newton Booth Tarkington in brief

Billie Burke), "Tweedles" and "Magnolia." The Tarkington novel, "Seventeen," was made into a successful play but the dramatization was by Hugh Stanilaus Stange and Stannard Mears.

Mr. Tarkington was born in 1869 in Indianapolis and has lived there all his life, spending his summers in Kennebunkport, Me. He went through the grammar schools and high school in Indianapolis and thence to Exeter and Princeton. He insists he had no stage leanings as a youth, but would recite "Now is the winter of our discontent"—"if let."

Mr. Tarkington's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Up From Nowhere." Produced by John D. Williams, at the Comedy Theatre, New York, September 8, 1919.
"Clarence." Produced by George C. Tyler, at the Hudson Theatre, New York, September 20, 1919.
"Poldekin." Produced by George C. Tyler, at the Park Theatre, New York, September 9, 1920.
"Rose Briar." Produced by Florenz Ziegfeld Jr., at the Empire Theatre, New York, December 25, 1922.
"Tweedles." Produced by Robert McLaughlin, at the Frazee Theatre, New York, August 13, 1923.
"Magnolia." Produced by Alfred E. Aarons, at the Liberty Theatre, New York, August 27, 1923.

RUPERT HUGHES

RUPERT HUGHES was a writing man who took enthusiastically and with considerable success to the theatre after having gained fame and a name as a writer and

not a little regular work as editor and contributor to such snappy tomes as the Encyclopedia Britannica.

In fact Mr. Hughes, I think, can reasonably be classified as an all-around writing man: as one of the most completely all-around writing men of whom America boasts. Successful as a writer of books he took up plays, and from plays went to moving picture scenarios. Not content with writing these he directed several with conspicuous success and is still more or less actively employed in keeping the screen safe and sane for our democracy.

Having been born in Lancaster, Mo., in 1872, and moved to Keokuk, Ia., seven years later, Mr. Hughes went through the public schools of those two towns. He got an A.B. at Adelbert College and took an M.A. at Yale for graduate work in English literature. He wrote a poem when he was 7, a play when he was 9, did many short pieces in school and college and when he left Yale was engaged in the writing of a libretto for a comic opera to be known as "The Bathing Girl." It was still known as "The Bathing Girl" when it reached Broadway and it lasted one single night. That was probably as helpful an experience as Mr. Hughes could possibly have had. It gave him training in accepting defeat early in his career which is always an asset to a dramatist.

When I asked him recently about the plays he had written he began by saying: "Besides many complete failures there are—" without the suggestion of an alibi. He is content to remember only the more successful of his acted plays, but he is not one to boast even of these.

Mr. Hughes began writing for the stage early in the nineteen hundreds when he collaborated with Colin Kemper on a drama called "Alexander the Great." This was played on tour for the better part of a year in 1903–04. In 1909 he had a semi-failure, "The Bridge," which was later revised as "The Man Between" and was successful for three years on tour.

He was a great hand for revising his plays, in fact. The next one was "The Transformation" which ran for six months originally, was revised as "Two Women" and played for two years.

The biggest of his stage successes, however, was the farce called "Excuse Me," produced in 1911. This entertainment caught popular fancy, was played for nearly five years in America and has figured in the repertories of many companies abroad. His next most successful piece of stage writing was a vaudeville sketch called "Miss 318" which was also played for four years.

As a young man Mr. Hughes was vastly enthusiastic about the military. He advanced from the grade of private to that of captain in the New York National Guard between 1897 and 1908, saw service on the Mexican border in 1916, served in various capacities during the war, achieving a majority, and is still a major in the Reserve Corps.

He makes his home mostly in Los Angeles now and is still interested in the movies, particularly those that are now becoming articulate and increasingly difficult to direct. Being a hard worker as well as a hard player, Mr. Hughes is one to give a hearty welcome to any new problem.

Mr. Hughes's last produced play in New York was:

"The Cat-Bird." Produced by Arthur Hopkins, at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, February 16, 1920.

EDNA FERBER

EDNA FERBER's association with the drama has been sporadic. Some years back she collaborated with Newman Levy on a comedy that was called "Twelve Hundred a Year," and later she helped the late George V. Hobart with what she describes as "a terrible dramatization of a series of short stories (written by me) known as the Emma McChesney stories."

After these experiences she devoted herself to novel writing and magazine contributions until she and George Kaufman decided there was a play in her story of "Old Man Minick." There was, and they extracted it. It was played with some, though not enough, success by O. P. Heggie.

Miss Ferber is free to admit that she has often wanted to write plays and she will even confess, if urged, that at one time she was eager to be an actress. More than this she is not at all sure the stage did not lose a potential Sarah Bernhardt when she gave up this ambition temporarily to try her hand at writing.

Miss Ferber acknowledges Kalamazoo as the town of her birth. She was two years old when the folks moved away. Her school years were spent in Appleton, Wis., where she graduated from the Ryan High School at the age of 17. She was a reporter on the Appleton

Daily Crescent the same year and she later sold what is known to newspaper editors as "stuff" to the Milwaukee Journal and the Chicago Tribune. It was, as I recall it, very good stuff.

Her success was not immediate as a short story writer, but her struggle toward success was neither prolonged nor discouraging. And her happy experiences as a magazine writer with a constantly growing public merged easily with her current success as a novelist.

The season of 1927–28 found the comedy, "The Royal Family," which she helped Mr. Kaufman write, and the musical comedy, "Show Boat," which was taken from her novel of that title, the two sensational successes of the Broadway list of entertainments.

Miss Ferber's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Minick" (with George S. Kaufman). Produced by Winthrop Ames, at the Booth Theatre, New York, September 24, 1924.

"The Royal Family" (with George S. Kaufman). Produced by Jed Harris, at the Selwyn Theatre, New York, December 28, 1927.

FANNIE HURST

FANNIE HURST is another of the writing notables who has gained great success in her own field, but never could quite negotiate the leap into drama with satisfaction either to herself or her producers.

She had written many stories, long and short, before 1917, when she tried her first play. This was called "The Land of the Free," and was produced by Wm. A. Brady with Florence Nash in the leading rôle. Its reception was friendly but its net takings inconspicuous. Four years later Miss Hurst tried again with a drama, "Back Pay," a serious study of post-war reactions in which a girl with a crepe de chine soul hears the call of the boy who was her smalltown sweetheart and who was blinded in the war, gives up her Riverside Drive love nest to nurse him till he dies, and then becomes an honest clerk in expiation of her sins. Helen MacKellar played it.

"Back Pay" was what may be called a quasi-success, and that was at least cheering to the novelist. Two years later she made a second serious bid with a dramatization of her story, "Humoresque," with Laurette Taylor as a star. But again the public refused to buy and Miss Hurst went back to her novels. She has flirted successfully with stories for the screen and she probably will try the stage again in due time.

She was born in St. Louis about the time the eighteen nineties were being ushered in. She lived and went to school there until 1914. Washington University gave her an A.B., and she afterward took graduate work in literature at Columbia.

Miss Hurst's plays produced since 1919:

"Humoresque." Produced at the Vanderbilt Theatre, New York, February 27, 1923.

"It Is to Laugh." Produced by Barbour, Cummins & Bryant, at the Eltinge Theatre, New York, December 26, 1927.

MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

It is Mary Roberts Rinehart's opinion that you simply cannot keep a natural scribbler from scribbling. She began it when she was fifteen and, she says, she still is at it.

As a matter of fact, too, one of the first things Mrs. Rinehart scribbled in completed form was a play. "The Double Life" it was called. That was twenty years ago and David Belasco thought well enough of the manuscript to plan a production for it. Nothing, however, came of that arrangement. There was a disagreement as to terms. The play was produced later by another manager and failed.

But having been bitten Mrs. Rinehart had to write more plays. She did one in one act, in collaboration with her husband, Dr. Stanley Rinehart, which they called "The Avenger," and then she had her first success writing "Seven Days" with the late Avery Hopwood. Mrs. Rinehart admits that she was not at all hopeful as they were working on this farce, but success was satisfying and long continued. "Seven Days" proved the farce sensation of its theatre year.

Curiously Mrs. Rinehart's second biggest success in the theatre was also the sensation of its season and was also written in collaboration with Mr. Hopwood. This was "The Bat," the first of the screeching mysteries and still the best of them.

Between "Seven Days" and "The Bat," however, there were several Rinehart plays that did not do

well. These included "Cheer Up," another farce. "Tish," dramatizing the author's Saturday Evening Post stories: "Bab," a comedy written for Helen Hayes, and "Spanish Love," a colorful affair elaborately produced. Since "The Bat" she has had one failure, "The Breaking Point," after which she returned to her stories, long, short and sure. Story writing may not be as exciting as playwriting, but, speculatively, it is a lot more certain.

Mrs. Rinehart was the Thomas Beverley Roberts' little girl in Pittsburg in the very late seventies. She grew up in Pittsburg, married and lived there until 1922, when she and the doctor moved to Washington, D. C. The capital has since been their home. Mary Roberts was educated in the public and high schools of Pittsburg and before she thought her scribbling might pay she studied to be a nurse. Though she graduated from the nurses' training school she never practiced, save in what she has described as "domestic emergencies."

Miss Rinehart's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"Spanish Love" (with Avery Hopwood). Produced by Wagenhals & Kemper, at the Maxine Elliott Theatre, New York, August 17, 1920.

"The Bat" (with Avery Hopwood). Produced by Wagenhals & Kemper, at the Morosco Theatre, New York, August 23, 1920.

"The Breaking Point." Produced by Wagenhals & Kemper, at the Klaw Theatre, New York, August 16, 1923.

LEE WILSON DODD

Lee Wilson Dodd has also swung a little undecidedly between his two loves, the novel and the play. I think he had rather be a successful playwright than a successful novelist. Most writing men with any feeling for the theatre feel that way about it. But he is wise enough to be grateful that he has been able to turn back to his book stories whenever the theatre has proved less than kind.

"His Majesty Bunker Bean" will likely be longest recalled as Mr. Dodd's contribution to the playhouses. It was produced in Chicago in 1915 and was popular for many months. Much more popular in the west, in fact, than it was later in the east, particularly in New York.

He had written two plays before "Bunker Bean," and both had been produced. These were "The Return of Eve" in 1909 and "Speed" in 1911. And he later did two others, "Pals First" and "The Changelings." The latter play was given the vote of Prof. William Lyons Phelps, a member of the sub-committee appointed to suggest a play for the Pulitzer prize award in 1923, as the best American play of that year. The main committee, however, turned down not only "The Changelings," with one vote, but "The Show-off" with two, and gave the prize to Prof. Hatcher Hughes' "Hell-bent fer Heaven."

"The Changelings" figured rather interestingly in another enterprise of the theatre. Henry Miller, hav-

ing achieved some seasons previously the ambition of a lifetime in the building and dedication of the Henry Miller Theatre in New York, had hopes of establishing therein before he died a resident company that should to some extent replace the Empire and Lyceum theatre stock companies with which he had been associated in his early years on the stage. Thrilled anew with the stock company idea Mr. Miller organized the Henry Miller Players and selected Mr. Dodd's drama as their first offering. For its chief rôles three leading women of standing were engaged—Blanche Bates, Laura Hope Crews and Ruth Chatterton. Mr. Miller himself headed the men's contingent, with Geoffrey Kerr, the English juvenile: Reginald Mason, and Felix Krembs to assist him.

"The Changelings" was variously received by its critics, but the playgoers' response was favorable. It ran the better part of the season. At the end of the season Mr. Miller's interests took another turn and we heard no more of the Henry Miller Players.

Mr. Dodd is technically a native of Franklin, Pa., but from the time he was six months old he grew up in the more stimulating atmosphere of New York. He went to school in Manhattan and through the Sheffield Scientific school and Yale University.

His father, like so many other fathers, was determined that young Lee Wilson should be a lawyer. And young Lee Wilson, like so many other sons with a scribbling urge, was equally determined that he would not be a lawyer. He studied at the New York Law school long enough to graduate, however, and then

promptly got married and gave up the law for literature.

He wrote a tragedy in verse which he called "Lovelace" but it was never produced. His struggles were discouraging until Chicago took joyously to "His Majesty Bunker Bean." After that the way was easier. Between plays the novels, "The Book of Susan" and "Lelia Chenoworth," attracted attention. Mr. Dodd lives in New Haven.

Mr. Dodd's last play to be produced in New York was:

"The Changelings." Produced by Henry Miller's Theatre Co., at the Henry Miller Theatre, New York, September 17, 1923.

LOUIS ANSPACHER

Louis Kaufman Anspacher is another man of letters who entered enthusiastically upon a career of playwriting, won a considerable success and then, little by little, had his enthusiasms blunted and his illusions crushed by those disappointments common to the experiences of writers of his quality.

He had built up a considerable following as a lecturer and teacher before he wrote his first play, which was a poetical drama called "Tristan and Isolde" published in 1904. It was never produced. Two years later a comedy of his called "An Embarrassment of Riches" was staged in New York, and thereafter he was active in the theatre for several years.

In 1907 he was represented by "Anne and the Arch Duke John," in 1909 by "The Woman of Impulse," in 1912 by "The Glass House." "The Washerwoman Duchess," "Our Children" and "The Unchastened Woman" followed, the latter gaining a notable success with the late Emily Stevens playing the leading rôle in 1915. It was revived in 1926 with Violet Kemble Cooper as the neurotic heroine.

He wrote two war plays while the world was in turmoil, "That Day" in 1917 and "The Rape of Belgium," with Max Marcin as collaborator, in 1918. He followed these with "The Dancer," (with Mr. Marcin), "All the King's Horses," "The New House" and "Dagmar." Under the title of "Daddalums" "The New House" was a success in London and on the continent. After this Professor Anspacher retired again to the study and the lecture platform.

Being wise and discreet as well, he has never disputed his parents in what is a family disagreement as to the place of his birth. Mother Anspacher, he tells me, always insisted that he was born in Paducah, Ky. while his father was sure the blessed event occurred in Cincinnati, O. The time was 50 years ago. One parent obviously, was absent-minded and I suspect it was father.

He took the public schools course in Rochester, N. Y., and New York City; had his A.B. from the College of the City of N. Y., studied law at Columbia and took a post-graduate course at Columbia, specializing in philosophy and ethics. He received his master's degree for a thesis which elucidated much that was mysterious in the Kantian philosophy.

He did not go in for playwriting immediately, he says, though he always loved the work, because he found literature and philosophy the most exciting play in the world. As lecturer he has had honors and engagements heaped upon him, first as secular lecturer at Temple Emanuel in New York and later on a wide circuit of lyceum and drama club platforms. He is one of the founders of the Drama League.

Mr. Anspacher's plays produced since 1919 are as follows:

"That Day." Produced by Richard G. Herndon, at the Bijou Theatre, New York, October 3, 1922.

"Dagmar" (an adaptation). Produced by Charles Bryant, at the Selwyn Theatre, New York, January 22, 1923.

"The Unchastened Woman." Revived by the Stagers, at the Princess Theatre, New York, February 15, 1926.

EARL DERR BIGGERS

Earl Derr Biggers figures that he is one of the luckier playwrights. He quit writing novels and plays and took to writing motion picture scenarios when both the quitting and the scenario market were at their peak.

It was his last summer in New York that cured Biggers. He had had some success with plays. He had written, as far back as 1912, a comedy called "If You're Only Human" which Rose Stahl wanted to buy but which her manager, Henry B. Harris, could not see. And when "If You're Only Human" was later produced in stock Mr. Biggers met George M. Cohan.

As a result of that meeting George M. bought the dramatic rights to Mr. Biggers' novel, "Seven Keys to Baldpate," and nearly everybody knows of the success that followed that purchase. Cohan did the play, made a vast amount of money with it and entered upon his most productive phase as a serious dramatist.

Biggers had also written a war play, "Inside the Lines," that went fairly well in New York. Later it was played for five hundred nights in London. Then he collaborated with William Hodge on a comedy, "A Cure for Curables," which Hodge played for two years.

"There was one line of mine in 'A Cure for Curables' when it reached the boards," Earl Derr wrote from California in telling me about his adventures as a playwright, "but after careful consideration Hodge removed it."

Then came the hectic summer and the cure. Two of the Biggers' plays were on the way that summer, "See-Saw," a story made into a musical comedy for the late Henry W. Savage, and a farce, "Three's a Crowd," chiseled from a Christopher Morley story called "Kathleen."

The rehearsals of these two plays overlapped, I gather, and the days were exciting for the young playwright. In one case he had a producer whose custom it was to stride the stage and roar his conclusions as to what he thought should be done with the play. In the other he had one whose companions at the moment were slinking fellows who looked like bailiffs. Looked like bailiffs because, in fact, they were bailiffs.

This latter producer was from time to time selling

partnerships in the Biggers' show to outsiders, hoping thereby to raise the costs of production and make secure the hotel accommodations upon which his hold was precarious. And as each new purchaser of ten per cent or five per cent came in he naturally demanded that the play be rewitten to suit him.

Between these experiences the Biggers' blood pressure mounted with the Biggers' disgust. And when the experiences were over the playwright sought the twin balms of California—the climate for his health, the motion picture factories for the re-establishment of what once had been a bank account.

To add the facts of life to the record, Earl Derr was born in Warren, O., in 1884, was graduated from Harvard with an A.B. in 1907, and became a newspaper man himself the year following. On the Boston Traveler he ran a humorous column and was later promoted, or at least transferred, to the drama desk. That is where he, quite naturally, became imbued with a desire to improve the drama. Many drama critics suffer the same urge but few have ever been able to do more than relieve the suffering temporarily.

Mr. Biggers' play produced since 1919:

"Three's A Crowd" (with Christopher Morley). Produced by John Cort, at the Cort Theatre, New York, December 4, 1919.

ONE WHO LINKS PAST AND PRESENT—

Being a brief account of a playwriting and play adapting career that began in the eighteen-seventies and was still progressing actively in the nineteen-twenty-nines.

DAVID BELASCO

Removed, at least periodically, from the current activities of the theatre there are playwrights who not only are still writing plays for American theatregoers, but who have been doing so for a matter of from twenty to fifty years. If we should now do these older playwrights some little honor it would, I think, be quite deserved.

David Belasco is their dean. He did his first serious playwriting in 1878, when, with James A. Herne, he adapted from an older melodrama a piece they first called "Chums" and later "Hearts of Oak," and he did his most recent playwriting in 1928, when he adapted and rearranged to suit his own purposes and those of the Belasco Theatre, Ferenc Molnar's satiric allegory, "The Red Mill," calling it "Mima" to focus attention upon its feminine star, Lenore Ulric.

During those fifty years Mr. Belasco has written, re-written, adapted and otherwise prepared for the playhouse literally hundreds of dramas, comedies, tragedies, burlesques, sketches and such. In San Francisco, where he began his career as actor and stage director, much of his time was spent in digging out and working over old manuscripts.

After he came east and assumed charge of the stage of the old Madison Square Theatre in New York, producing Bronson Howard's "Young Mrs. Winthrop" in 1882, the record fairly bristles with credits to "D. B." as author or handy assistant.

"The Rajah," (revived by D. B.): "The Stranglers of Paris," (new version by D. B.): "May Blossom," (by D. B.): "Valerie," (by D. B. based on Sardou's "Fernande,"): "The Highest Bidder," (by D. B., based on a play called "Trade," written by J. Madison Morton and Robert Reece for E. A. Sothern): "The Wife," (by D. B. and DeMille); and so on for pages and pages, through "Zaza," "Madame Butterfly," "The Darling of the Gods," "The Music Master," "The Return of Peter Grimm," etc.

Hardly a play directed by him that he did not have a hand in. The impulse, insist those who are naturally suspicious, was due to the man's insatiable determination to have a hand in everything.

To which his friends make answer that he had a hand in everything because in those days he had the same genius for reshaping conventional material, bringing it closer to the tastes of the public and the possibilities of the theatre, that he has today.

In any event the "D. B." plays persisted, and there is no reason for us to doubt that the Belasco touch was any different then than it has been since, a touch that gives any play that he produces the last bit of theatricalism and perfection of physical detail the subject will stand, and occasionally a bit more than is good for it.

No man in the theatre expends the same time or the same energy in bringing a play to that point of completion worthy of what he accepts as dramatic art that Belasco does. His critics may quarrel over the value of the results he achieves, but the results are there and

in their class have stood unmatched in the theatre of the last two generations.

So many lives of David Belasco have been written it will be necessary to do no more here than outline his career for the benefit of this particular record. His people were English Jews who reached California in a sailing vessel after transferring across the Isthmus of Panama on muleback. In the California city they went to live in one room in a Howard Street basement and there young David was born in 1853 during one of the hardest storms of the rainy season, which may account for his love for weather effects in the drama.

Struggling slowly to their family feet the Belascos moved five years later to Victoria, B. C. which had barely recovered from being a trading post of the Hudson Bay Company at that time. There the boy David got a job with the local stock company. He was carried on as Cora's child in "Pizzaro," and later carried on again in "Metamora" when Edwin Forrest was the visiting star. He was about five at the time and I have no doubt that he made valuable suggestions to his various carriers as to the most effective manner in which he could be handled.

David was also sent to school in Victoria and later turned over to Father MacGuire, a benevolent and learned Roman Catholic, to be taught his reading, writing and arithmetic. David so loved the good father and his studies that he ran away and joined a circus. He was later retrieved by the elder Belasco with sound effects.

In 1865 the Belascos returned to San Francisco and David was sent to study with and be spiritually reclaimed by a relative who also happened to be a rabbi. Later, discovering there were prizes offered for elocution in the public schools, the boy took more kindly to learning and studied at the Lincoln Grammar School until 1871, one of his instructors being Nelly Holbrook, who later became the mother of Holbrook Blinn.

When it became necessary for him to do his share to help support the family young Belasco turned naturally to the theatre in which he had already had experience. By 1873, after a few jobs as an actor, he became nominally assistant stage director of the Metropolitan Theatre and began his career as a producer of plays. Nearly everybody associated with the organization was willing to let young Belasco do all the work and, as it happened, he was willing to do it.

For the next ten years he was associated as stage director with various organizations, met many of the travelling stars, John McCullough, Lawrence Barrett, Walter Montgomery, Mrs. D. P. Bowers, Adelaide Nielsen, Edwin Booth, etc., and decided to take their advice and try his fortunes in the east.

He travelled as far as Chicago with James A. and Mrs. Herne, (Katherine Corcoran). On the way they gave several performances of "Chums," in which Belasco and Mrs. Herne had much more faith than Mr. Herne. The play continued a failure, however, until they reached Chicago. There, partly rewritten and renamed "Hearts of Oak," it was produced in the only

place they could find for it, a sort of beer garden run by John Hamlin. It proved an immediate success, and later, on a return engagement, repeated that success at the more fashionable Hooley's Theatre. The piece was then taken to New York, where it failed again. Eventually, however, it made Herne a fortune.

Belasco, having had a disagreement with the Hernes, withdrew from the original partnership, selling his interest in the play for $1,500, which he reports having had considerable trouble collecting. Broke and discouraged he returned to San Francisco and worked back into his old job at the Baldwin. He came again to New York the following season, when he brought down his latest adaptation, "La Belle Russe," hoping to get a production for it at Wallack's. After further unhappy experiences he sold this piece for $1,600 and a ticket home and again went back to San Francisco and the Baldwin Theatre.

Another season in San Francisco and Belasco came finally to New York to take over the stage direction of the Madison Square Theatre, then run by Daniel Frohman and the Mallory brothers. Two years later he wrote and produced "May Blossom," his first eastern success as a dramatist.

A few years later his collaboration with Henry C. DeMille produced those Lyceum Theatre successes, "The Wife," "The Charity Ball," and "Men and Women." He wrote "The Girl I Left Behind Me" with Franklyn Fyles and "The Heart of Maryland" with Max Bleiman, whom he afterward bought out. He fashioned "Madame Butterfly" from a story by John

Luther Long, revised Charles Klein and Lee Arthur's "The Auctioneer" for David Warfield. He wrote "The Darling of the Gods" with John Luther Long, "The Music Master" with Charles Klein, "The Girl of the Golden West" and "The Return of Peter Grimm" by himself.

Of recent years he has written few plays, doing a little revising now and then but depending mostly on other authors. He did make the English adaptation of Andre Picard's "Kiki" for Lenore Ulric, helped Tom Cushing with "Laugh Clown Laugh," and, as said, adapted Molnar's "The Red Mill" which he retitled "Mima."

Mr. Belasco is frank in saying that his only joy in life comes from working in the theatre and he will be quite content to die there. Henry Irving's passing practically on the stage was, he thinks, the ideal way for one who loves the theatre and has given his life to it to say goodbye to the theatre. As he spends but very little time away from the theatre he will probably get his wish.

The Belascoan contributions to the native drama have not been inconsiderable, but it is as producer rather than dramatist that his name will be carried down through the histories of our stage. In this division his craft and his tireless energies have set standards of definite value in the American theatre.

Plays by Mr. Belasco produced since 1919:

"The Son Daughter" (with George Scarborough). Produced by Mr. Belasco at the Belasco theatre, New York, Nov. 19, 1919.

"Laugh Clown, Laugh" (with Tom Cushing). Produced by Mr. Belasco at the Belasco theatre, New York, Nov. 28, 1923.

"Fanny" (with Willard Mack). Produced by Mr. Belasco at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, Sept. 21, 1926.

THE NEAR VETERANS—

Being a group of those playwrights who were more prominent yesterday than they are today, and who for the most part have either retired or turned to other divisions of what is known as the writing game.

WINCHELL SMITH

It is not easy to classify the veterans in any department of the theatre. Nor the near veterans. Most of the playwrights of whom I shall write in this chapter are veterans in the sense that they have been writing for the stage for many years. Many of them are still at it, and any one of them may turn in a modern masterpiece to-day, or to-morrow, or at least weeks before the printer has finished with this script.

Winchell Smith, one of the best and sanest of them, has said that playwrights grow old-fashioned over night and that when that happens they had best quit. There is truth in that observation. But it would not surprise me in the least if Mr. Smith, in person, although he is probably convinced in his own mind that he is ready to quit—it would not surprise me to have him bring home from Europe on any steamer any day a play so wisely written (or rewritten) that it would be sure to attack and hold the immediate interest of any modern producer of comedy and to prove, after Mr. Smith had devoted his gift of craft to staging it, one of the popular hits of the year.

Of those recent collaborators, John Emerson and Anita Loos Emerson, Anita is young enough to be numbered with the moderns, and so is her "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," but John is older than "The Con-

spiracy," which gave him his first step-up as a playwright in 1912.

Of those other collaborators of the day before yesterday, Harriet Ford and Harvey O'Higgins, Miss Ford is still active in the theatre. Jules Eckert Goodman is always writing plays when he is not trying to lower the Westchester County records for replaced divots. Thompson Buchanan recently gave up the movies to try again for a place on Broadway. Philip Bartholomae is reasonably convinced there is another "Over Night" farce in his workshop if he can ever find the time to write it, and you would have a difficult time convincing Samuel Shipman that he may not bound back any moment with a brand new collaborator, another "East Is West" and the familiar confession that he first gets his plot and then writes the play under forced draft in eight or ten days at Atlantic City, finding his chief inspiration in Russian caviare.

If these writers object to being chaptered with the near-veterans I will apologize now and have that over with. But near-veterans they are to me, for I have known them a long time.

Winchell Smith is "Bill" Smith to those who know him and to those who work with him. You probably are familiar with the story of his having gone, in a time of depression, to a numerology expert to have his name readjusted. She changed "Shall Win" into "Winchell" and the next season Mr. Smith produced "Brewster's Millions" and started a bank account. He has piled up a tidy little fortune of six or seven million

since then, from which you are privileged to draw your own conclusions. (Let me see, where did I put that numerologist's address?)

There is a whole book in the Smith adventures and yet he has had a hand in the shaping and reshaping of no more than fourteen or fifteen plays that reached production. He started with "Brewster's Millions," followed with "The Fortune Hunter," and then wrote or helped write "Love Among the Lions," a dramatization: "Via Wireless," (with Paul Armstrong): "Bobby Burnitt," another dramatization: "The Boomerang," (with Victor Mapes): "Officer 666" (with Augustin McHugh): "Turn to the Right," (with John E. Hazzard): "Lightnin'" (with Frank Bacon): "Thank You," (with Tom Cushing): "The New Henrietta," (with Victor Mapes), and "The Holy Terror" (with George Abbott.)

He was a farm boy, this skillful stage director. Born in Hartford, Conn., six years after the civil war ended, he was schooled in the public and high schools of the town, worked on a farm in the summer and finally branched out in business as a junior partner in his father's hay and grain store, where he lasted two years.

Being horribly stage struck he drifted into amateur theatricals and became an actor of sorts. Twelve years later, having married, he discovered that while two might live as cheaply as one his two could not live on his one actor's salary. So he went in for producing.

Arnold Daly had the rights to Shaw's "Candida" and $100. Mr. Smith had his producers' urge and

$145. They pooled their capital. The Shuberts promised them a theatre if they could take care of their own rehearsals, which they did.

"Candida" was produced, attracted attention after a struggle and led to other Shaw revivals. The venture ended when all the actors and Mr. Smith were arrested for the production of "Mrs. Warren's Profession."

Winchell was looking for a job as stage manager when Frederick Thompson, then of the Hippodrome, handed him George Barr McCutcheon's "Brewster's Millions" and told him to dramatize it. He hated writing and dragged in Byron Ongley. Together they finished something that looked like a play. One night Smith started to read it to Thompson, who luckily fell asleep in the middle of the first act. Winchell quit reading. An hour later he called Thompson.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked the manager.

"I think it's all right," agreed Thompson stifling a yawn.

A week later the piece went into rehearsal. It grew steadily worse, according to the playwright, but finally was produced in Trenton, N. J., with at least one of the authors hiding in New York. It was rewritten a couple of times after that and brought to New York. It was a hit at the New Amsterdam and eventually made more than a million dollars.

It was his partnership with John Golden and the production of the series of clean and simple comedies beginning with "Turn to the Right" that expanded the Smith fortunes and established those of Mr. Golden,

Name, and the fullness thereof.... Rupert Hughes (Who's Who in America has a detailed biography)

Age, and the correctness thereof--shall we say approximately? 56 (b. Jan 31, 1872

Birthplace and when escape therefrom was successfully accomplished, if ever.... b. Lancaster, Mo. was moved to Keokuk, Iowa, at 7, settled in New York at 21,

Schooldays, and thence to what seat of learning? Studied in public schools in Mo and Ia. Graduated with B.A. at Adelbert College, and took M.A. at Yale for graduate work in English literature

Early inclinations toward work, if any..... My first poem published at 7, my first play produced in my mother's drawing room at the age of 9. I was a hard student and a hard player, and still am both

Early inclinations toward the drama, if any..... see above. I produced several plays as a child, acted in college and before leaving Yale was embarked in a libretto for a comic opera called "The Bathing Girl"

Your first play. (My first play was produced at 9 and called "Little by Little". I played the star part wonderfully badly. My first production, "The Bathing Girl," lasted one night in New York thereby securing extraordinary fame

Your other plays..... Besides many complete failures, there were "Alexander the Great" (written with Collin Kemper) ran for a year on the road, 1903-4. "The Bridge" ran for 3 months in 1909, was revived as "The Man Between" and ran three years. "The Transformation" (pp 1909) toured for six months, was revised as "Two Women" and played for two years. "The Cat Bird" with John Drew played several months in 1920. "Excuse Me" pred 1911 played for several years, 4 companies playing it one year 2 another. I have had a number of successful vaudeville pieces. This 3/8" was played for 4 years, 2 companies playing it for 1 season.

Your first production..... The Bathing Girl see above.

Your first success and what did you think of it..... "Excuse Me" was my first real success and worshipped the ground it walked on. It was my good to me.

The high lights of Rupert Hughes' crowded career as he sees them

a writer of popular songs until that time (the author of "Poor Butterfly" incidentally) who became one of the shrewdest and best liked of play producers.

Fortune's wheel turned right for "Bill" Smith and though he was just a little suspicious he took the goddess at her word. With his rapidly accumulating profits he went back to Connecticut in 1912 and bought an estate in Farmington. Also bought a flour mill and still runs it in memory of his boyhood. At least he lets others run it for him. That and a grain storehouse. He likes to fool around his place—but he has been spending more and more time in Italy the last few years.

"I don't honestly think I ever had much ambition," he has written. "I loved the theatre but I wanted to act more than anything, and the unhappiest day of my life was when I quit it. . . . What writing I have done has been horrible drudgery. I've always detested it. I did it only because I found I could make money by it."

When he staged "These Charming People" a friendship sprung up between Mr. Smith and the author, Michael Arlen, which resulted in their working together on a failure called "The Zoo."

Mr. Smith's plays produced since 1919 were:

"Thank You" (with Tom Cushing). Produced by John Golden, at the Longacre Theatre, New York, October 3, 1921.

"A Holy Terror" (with George Abbott). Produced by John Golden, at the George M. Cohan Theatre, New York, September 28, 1925.

HARRIET FORD
HARVEY O'HIGGINS

HARRIET FORD, I assume, was the inspiration of the playwriting collaboration of herself and the late Harvey O'Higgins who died just before this book was ready for the printer. Mr. O'Higgins had been definitely wedded to literature until he decided to try to make a play out of some magazine stories he had written with Judge Ben Lindsey of Denver. "The Beast and the Jungle" was the title.

Miss Ford, on the other hand, had been drawn to the stage early. She had taken a course at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, after she was through school in New Haven and Boston, and had studied with David Belasco. She was an actress for six years after that.

In 1900 her first play, "The Greatest Thing in the World," which was written with Beatrice DeMille, was produced successfully with Sarah Cowell LeMoyne as its star. She did a dramatization of "A Gentleman of France" for Kyrle Bellew and Eleanor Robson, and another of "Audrey" for Miss Robson. She helped Joseph Medill Patterson with "The Fourth Estate," the first of the modern newspaper plays, and then began her work with Mr. O'Higgins.

"The Beast and the Jungle" was sold several times, but no manager ever produced it. "The Argyle Case" was the first of the Ford-O'Higgins joint efforts to attract attention. They followed with "The Dummy," "Polygamy," "The Dickey Bird," "Mr. Lazarus,"

"On the Hiring Line" and a dramatization of Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street."

In 1923 Miss Ford wrote "In the Next Room" with Eleanor Robson Belmont and it proved one of the most entertaining of the prevalent mystery shows. She was born in Seymour, Conn., but she has lived all her writing life in New York.

Mr. O'Higgins, born in London, Ont., spent the usual years at the public schools and four years at Toronto University. He then took naturally to newspaper work on the Toronto Star, and as naturally migrated to New York for a sort of post graduate course in reporting. In the big city he worked mostly on the Globe.

In 1901 he gave up newspaper work without a qualm and went in for free lance magazine work. Many newspaper men do this but not all of them stick it. O'Higgins found a market for his stories, caused something of a sensation with "The Beast and the Jungle" (with Judge Lindsey) and "Under the Prophet in Utah" (with Frank J. Cannon), and then slipped stageward, as noted, with Miss Ford acting as counsellor and guide.

Mr. O'Higgins was associated with George Creel and the Committee on Public Information in Washington during the war years. In 1919 he went back to literature, his more notable contributions including a series of articles on psycho-analysis written with Dr. Edward H. Reede of Washington, and the novels, "Julie Cane" and "Clara Barron."

Plays by Miss Ford and Mr. O'Higgins produced since 1919:

"On the Hiring Line." Produced by George C. Tyler at the Criterion Theatre, New York, Oct. 20, 1919.

"Sweet Seventeen" (with L. Westervelt). Produced by John Henry Mears at the Lyceum theatre, New York, March 17, 1924.

"Main Street." Produced by the Messrs. Shubert at the National theatre, New York, Oct. 5, 1921.

JULES ECKERT GOODMAN
MONTAGUE GLASS

JULES ECKERT GOODMAN is probably thought of by the present day playgoer as one of the confirmed collaborators of the theatre because of his several years of association with Montague Glass in the fashioning of the "Potash and Perlmutter" comedies.

But Mr. Goodman was a playwright of independent activity and achievement long before that series came into existence. As far back as 1908 he had three plays produced in one season—"The Test" with Blanche Walsh, "The Man Who Stood Still" with Louis Mann and "The Right to Live."

For the eight years next following Mr. Goodman was hot on the trail of fame and such fortune as went with it. During these years he wrote "Mother," "The Point of View," "The Silent Voice," in which Otis Skinner played: "The Trap" "Just Outside the Door," a dramatization of Stevenson's "Treasure Island" and "The Man Who Came Back."

Then came the Goodman-Glass comedies, "Object Matrimony," "Business Before Pleasure," "Why

Worry?" "His Honor Abe Potash," (for the late Barney Bernard) and "Partners Again."

With Maud Durbin Skinner Mr. Goodman wrote "Pietro" for Otis Skinner in 1919: "The Lawbreaker" and "Chains," and then went back to the Glass partnership in the hope of reviving the old Potash and Perlmutter interest with "Potash and Perlmutter, Detectives." The death of Barney Bernard, however, so many years the querulous but lovable Abe of the comedies, had effectively killed that interest.

Mr. Goodman comes from as far west as Oregon, which is considerable distance from New York. He was born in the town of Gervais and went to school in Portland. Later he entered Harvard and came out with a B.A. in 1899. From there he went to Columbia and added an M.A. in 1901. He was a magazine editor and contributor for several years before he took to playwriting, being the managing editor of Current Literature for four years.

Mr. Goodman attributes his interest in the theatre, which was early and definite, to the almost fanatical love of the playhouse indulged by his mother. "She had seen Booth and Barrett and never let me forget it," Jules Eckert reports. "She made me read Shakespeare even before I could hold the single volume complete of his works."

Attaining theatregoing years he expanded with enthusiasm for Richard Mansfield, Frederick Warde, Louis James and Julia Marlowe. At 15 he wrote a first play and it was, he admits, that kind of a play. He is still writing, in his Peekskill studio—when the wife, the three younger Goodmans, the golf courses

or touring friends do not provide him with the familiar excuses to quit.

Mr. Glass's playwriting career has been practically covered by these collaborations with Mr. Goodman. There had been two previous dramatizations of the Perlmutter and Potash comedies, the first written in collaboration with the late Charles Klein in 1913, and the second called "Abe and Mawruss," with the late Roi Cooper Megrue in 1915.

Mr. Glass comes from Manchester, England. He was born in 1877, came to America in 1890 and studied at both the College of the City of New York and New York University.

Plays by Mr. Goodman produced since 1919:

"His Honor Abe Potash" (with Montague Glass). Produced by A. H. Woods at the Bijou theatre, New York, Oct. 14, 1919.

"Chains." Produced by William A. Brady at the Playhouse, New York, Sept. 18, 1923.

"Simon Called Peter" (with Edward Knoblock). Produced by William A. Brady at the Klaw theatre, New York, Nov. 10, 1924.

"Potash and Perlmutter, Detectives" (with Montague Glass). Produced by A. H. Woods at the Ritz theatre, New York, Aug. 31, 1926.

JOHN AND ANITA LOOS EMERSON

THE Emersons, John and Anita Loos, were for many years the most happily active of collaborators. Or seemed so to be to all their intimates. Their screen

plays were successful, their reputations as title writers and directors grew apace, and their ambitions kept step with them. California was their heaven and their home. They were practically strangers to the Broadway that knew them when—

Then the play bug that had been lying more or less dormant awoke and bit them. In a plot they had sketched out for a movie they saw the makings of a great comedy. They wrote it and called it "The Whole Town's Talking." Not a big success, but pleasantly received. They decided to do another. "The Fall of Eve" followed and fell. Miss Loos meantime had written her immensely successful "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" as a magazine serial and they agreed to make a play of that. Then they quit again.

Mr. Emerson's stage days go back a considerable distance. Twenty-four years ago, while he was still in his late twenties, he was producing plays for the Frohmans and the Shuberts. In 1912 he wrote and played in "The Conspiracy," scoring a worth while success.

"I thought it was awful artistically but it was grand commercially," he confessed recently.

A year later he wrote and produced a piece called "Step Lively" and was shortly thereafter won over to the movies. Being one of the first as well as one of the best of the stage directors to take up the new work, Mr. Emerson's success was immediate and pronounced. He remained on the cinema farms until 1923, when he came east to produce "The Whole Town's Talking."

Born in Sandusky, Ohio, the later Emerson school

days were spent at Oberlin College and the University of Chicago. He studied for a term in the dramatic School of the Chicago Musical College, of which Florenz Ziegfeld's father was president and Hart Conway the dramatic coach. In his comparative youth he wrote a melodrama called "The Road to Honor," but he does not talk much about that. Neither is he particularly optimistic regarding the state of and hope for the legitimate drama.

"About the only hope I see for the drama in America," writes John, "lies in the fact that the real estate operators have built so many theatres they can't possibly fill them all with motion pictures." He has been for several terms president of the Actors' Equity Association.

Anita Loos, who married Mr. Emerson in 1919, is a Californian. Sissions, Siskiyou county, she admits sibilantly, was the scene of her birth and San Diego the town where she spent much of her girlhood, though she also knew San Francisco and Los Angeles during her school days.

Miss Loos was a child actress at 4 and lived practically in the theatre for many years thereafter. She wrote titles (particularly clever titles they were, too) and scenarios for the moving pictures Mr. Emerson directed for David Wark Griffith, Douglas Fairbanks and the Talmadges, while she was still in her teens.

"The Whole Town's Talking" was her first, "The Fall of Eve" her second, "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" her third play. She may do another, but confesses to no great ambition in that direction.

"I am trying to retire," says she: "I consider am-

bition a second-rate quality and aspire to lead a lazy life in Vienna."

Which is the sort of aspiration that frequently leads to periods of great activity with writing folk.

Plays by Mr. Emerson and Miss Loos produced since 1919:

"The Whole Town's Talking." Produced by A. H. Woods at the Bijou theatre, New York, Aug. 29, 1923.
"The Fall of Eve." Produced by Mr. Emerson at the Booth theatre, New York, Aug. 31, 1925.
"Gentlemen Prefer Blondes." Produced by Edgar Selwyn at the Times Square theatre, New York, Sept. 28, 1926.

PHILIP BARTHOLOMAE

PHILIP BARTHOLOMAE had the thrill that comes something less than once in a lifetime to the average dramatist when he saw his first play so big a success that the producer began organizing three road companies to play it before the curtain was down on the first show.

This lucky hit was a farce called "Over Night," produced by William A. Brady in 1912. The three companies aforementioned were headed by Margaret Lawrence, Madge Kennedy and Francine Larrimore, all three newcomers to the stage then, and all three since risen to stardom.

Nor was "Over Night" the result of a long struggle on Mr. Bartholomae's part. He just thought, he says, that he would like to write a play and sat down and wrote one. It was blind luck he thinks, in the light of

his experiences following this adventure, that made the play the overnight success its title prophetically promised.

Young Bartholomae, after having left a private school in Chicago to study abroad (he had a year at Heidelberg, where he took philosophy, art and literature), had come back to America and tried earnestly to become a highbrow contributor to the magazines that specialized in that form of literature. Frequently he waxed poetic, but is not boastful about that. Then he turned nonchalantly to the drama, with his "Over Night" experience as the result.

Thereafter, deciding that Providence intended him as a veritable leader of the dramatists and a little saviour of the better theatre, he wrote many plays, swearing by all his gods that he never would demean his muse by writing musical pieces.

His third play was a musical comedy and pretty bad, a piece called "Kiss Me Quick," and thereafter he wrote a lot of them.

Before that the young playwright (he was born in Chicago in the early eighties) had done rather a nice little comedy called "Little Miss Brown" for little Miss Kennedy. After he went in for musical things he wrote "Very Good, Eddie," "Girl o' Mine," (for Dorothy Dixon the dancer): "Over the Top," "Tangerine" (for Julia Sanderson,) "Barnum Was Right" and "Kittie's Kisses."

Mr. Bartholomae has devoted the last few years to an intensive study of this and that in connection with the Hollywood scenario situation.

Plays by Mr. Bartholomae produced since 1919:

"Tangerine" (with Guy Bolton). Produced by Carl Carleton at the Casino theatre, New York, Aug. 9, 1921.

"Barnum Was Right" (with John Meehan). Produced by Louis F. Werba at the Frazee theatre, New York, March 12, 1923.

"Kitty's Kisses," (with Otto Harbach). Produced by William A. Brady at the Playhouse, New York, May 6, 1926.

A SALAAM TO THE PAST—

Being a casually sentimental tribute to the favorite dramatists of the day before yesterday who played a significant part in laying the foundations of the modern American theatre.

AUGUSTUS THOMAS AND OTHERS

It was, if you pause to think of it, an important time in the growth of American dramatists, those years that saw David Belasco's rise. Nothing much worth while had happened to the American drama before the middle eighties.

Belasco's earlier contemporaries, men like Bronson Howard, Augustin Daly, Henry C. DeMille and James A. Herne, have long since passed out of the picture. His contemporaries of even thirty years ago are not, many of them, still actively engaged in playwriting. But the period from 1885 to 1905 doubled the number of his native competitors in the theatre.

Augustus Thomas was making his first bid for notice the year Belasco moved from California to New York and became Daniel Frohman's stage director. He was a St. Louis newspaper man turned actor, and he had made a dramatization of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett's story, "Editha's Burglar," which met with some success.

The same year (1883) being an active and enthusiastic young person, Thomas wrote four other plays, all short. None of them is remembered today, probably not even by Mr. Thomas, but they were a beginning. The titles, "A Man of the World," "A Studio Picture," "A New Years' Call" and "A Leaf from the Woods," suggest that the youthful playwright was aware at this time of the Charles Hoyt superstition that a play's title had to begin with the article "A" if success were to be assured.

These four plays were forgotten and two or three others as well in the next few years, but by the early nineties that same Thomas had moved up to the first line of native playwrights.

A. M. Palmer, an upstanding citizen from North Stonington, Conn., who was helping cement the Daly and Wallack tradition in New York, produced Mr. Thomas's first state play, "Alabama," in 1891, and thereafter the young man's progress was rapid. Within the next ten years some of the best native melodramas came from his workshop and studio, including "Col. Carter of Cartersville," "In Mizzoura," "New Blood," "The Hoosier Doctor," and "Arizona." Thence he advanced to the comedy and drawing-room drama series with "The Earl of Pawtucket" (and Lawrence D'Orsay,) "Mrs. Leffingwell's Boots" (and Margaret Illington), "The Witching Hour" (and John Mason.)

There were others, and if the fire and genius seemed gradually to fade from the output in general both were fanned to flame again by such a performance as Lionel Barrymore gave in "The Copperhead" and the true touch for melodrama that "Rio Grande" revived.

Thomas, in those days, was a hard worker, a prolific writer and as American as Theodore Roosevelt the first. He has nearly a hundred plays to his credit and a greater number of successes among them than most of his successors will produce. He was born in St. Louis and, at 72, is entitled to the comforts of his home and the Lambs' Club.

The eighteen eighties and nineties were also the

years of William Gillette's greatest activities. Beginning with farce, which included "The Professor" and an adaptation, "The Private Secretary," this fine actor and playwright turned later to melodrama of the repressed school, scoring tremenduously with his war plays, "Held by the Enemy" and "Secret Service," and finally with the detective romance he wove around Conan Doyle's "Sherlock Holmes." At 73 Mr. Gillette, born in Hartford, Conn., is also taking his ease.

Charles H. Hoyt was writing the most successful of native comedies in the eighties, beginning with "A Bunch of Keys" and continuing through the "A" series with "A Rag Baby," "A Trip to Chinatown," "A Texas Steer," "A Milk White Flag" etc. down to "A Contented Woman" and "A Stranger in New York." These were the forerunners of the modern musical comedy revue. Hoyt died in 1900.

In the early nineties Clyde Fitch appeared. Thereafter the native theatre was less dependent than it had been upon the foreign dramatists, led notably by that important British group, Arthur Wing Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, Richard Claude Carton, Sidney Grundy, Alfred Sutro and later James M. Barrie.

Fitch undertook to write the politer drawing room comedy of native setting and character and succeeded. The next twenty years he produced about fifty plays, ranging from "Beau Brummell," (in the dramatization of which he was so greatly helped by Richard Mansfield, according to Mr. Mansfield, that neither of them was ever very happy claiming credit for it), through "His Grace de Grammont," "Nathan Hale," "The Moth and the Flame," "The Cow-boy and the

Lady," "The Climbers," "Captain Jinks," "The Girl With Green Eyes," and "The Truth," to his last and, many think, his most significant play, "The City."

The fact that many of the Fitch plays are still popular stock company revivals is proof of their lasting quality. Their author, born in Elmira, N. Y., in 1865, died in 1909.

These were the days of Madeleine Lucette Ryley, who sold "The Squire of Dames" to John Drew and "An American Citizen" to Nat Goodwin. (Playwrights mostly wrote for and to the order of stars in those days.) It was the day of Martha Morton, with her "A Fool of Fortune" for Crane, Marguerite Merrington, who wrote "Captain Letterblair" for Edward H. Sothern, and Paul Kester who wrote "When Knighthood was in Flower" for Julia Marlowe.

It was the day of Henry Blossom, Thomas W. Ross and "Checkers," and of George Broadhurst, who quit being a stock broker's clerk in Chicago to write a series of farces beginning with "Why Smith Left Home," continuing with "What Happened to Jones" and moving on down through a notable list of more serious dramas that reached its peak with "Bought and Paid For."

It was a day in which Otis Skinner was determined to be an actor-manager-author and dramatized "Lazarre" and "Prince Otto" for his own loyal following. It was the day in which Franklyn Fyles, one of the few dramatic critics who ever wrote a successful play, did "The Governor of Kentucky" for Crane, "The Girl I left Behind Me" (with Belasco) and

"Cumberland '61." It was the day of the wild Lincoln Carter melodramas, "The Heart of Chicago," "The Tornado," etc., and the day of Owen Davis's beginning with "Bertha, the Sewing Machine Girl," and all that long list of lurid dramas that led him finally to finer and better things in the theatre, as is related in his own chapter among the Pulitzer prize winners.

It was the day of Edward E. Rose and his dramatizations of "Richard Carvel," "Janice Meredith" and "Alice of Old Vincennes." It was a day you may like to recall as that of Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland and Beulah Dix's "Road to Yesterday" and Eugene Presbrey's play made from Hornung's "Raffles" for Kyrle Bellew.

It was the day of Owen Wister, Kirke LaShelle and "The Virginian," the day of the Mayos, Frank, and later his son, Edwin, and their dramatization of Mark Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson." It was the day of Anne Crawford Flexner's dramatization of Alice Hegan Rice's "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," and of George Hazelton's "Mistress Nell" and Henrietta Crosman—a success that led to that fine actress playing Rosalind in "As You Like It" for over a hundred performances on Broadway.

It was notably the day of a modest Indianian name Ade—George Ade, country banker's son of Kentland and Lafayette, Ind., and of Chicago, Ill., who quit writing newspaper columns and colorful character sketches and novelettes, like "Pink Marsh" and "Artie," to try his hand at musical comedy under the chaperonage of Col. Henry W. Savage. Ade wrote "The Sultan of Sulu" (1902) and "Peggy from

Paris," (1903) and then found his truer metier with "The County Chairman," (1903) and "The College Widow" (1904). He drifted back into musical comedy after one or two disappointments with later comedies and finally decided to loaf, invite his soul and be happy. He is still at it, writing when the mood is right, both for the magazines and the screen. He was born in Kentland, in 1866.

This day in the theatre also saw the birth of a dramatist's demand for freedom of expression and the unfettered plot that did not crystallize finally until just the other day with the production of "What Price Glory?" and "Rain."

It was in the nineteen hundreds that Eugene Walter, newspaper man turned dramatist, decided that the time had arrived when the American drama should be provided with viscera as well as heart and lungs.

His "Paid in Full" was produced in 1907. There were disputes as to its authorship but none as to its incisive criticism of a form of dramatic story that had become hopelessly conventionalized. Forward-seeing critics, led by Walter Prichard Eaton, declared it to signalize the dawn of a new freedom in the drama, and when Mr. Walter's second success, "The Easiest Way," followed, the prediction was confirmed.

After these came "The Wolf" and "Fine Feathers" and a popular dramatization of "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine." But Walter is not an eager artisan. He is fairly content to rest on his laurels and his royalties for long periods. Recently he has been more active, doing considerable work for the screen play producers and adapting the two-character play,

Name, and the fullness thereof..... Mary Roberts Rinehart

Age, and the correctness thereof--shall we say approximately? 51—exactly!

Birthplace and when escape therefrom was successfully accomplished, if ever.... Born in Pittsburgh, Penna. Lived there until January 1922. After that and since then, Washington, D.C.

Schooldays, and thence to what seat of learning?

Public and High Schools. Also took course in nurses' training and graduated. Have used course, also, in domestic emergencies.

Early inclinations toward work, if any.....

Always liked to scribble, and am still scribbling. Wrote short stories for the local newspapers when I was fifteen.

Early inclinations toward the drama, if any.....

After two or three years of short stories I wrote my first play, which Belasco accepted. Could not agree on terms and I left him for a bad manager and indifferent production.

Your first play..... The Double Life, 1908.

Your other plays.....

Your first production,..... See "first play"

Your first success and what did you think of it.....

Seven Days, in collaboration with Avery Hopwood. Was not helpful as per quote it, but it was a great success at the time. Am never optimistic about any of my plays.

Mary Roberts Rinehart is frankness itself

"Jealousy," for producer Woods. He was born in Cleveland in 1874 and still has active years ahead of him.

It was in the late nineteen hundreds, too, that another important figure arose and took a definite place among American dramatists. He was Edward Sheldon of Chicago, one of the first young men both to draw attention to and justify the existence of Prof. George Pierce Baker's class in play construction then known as English 47 at Harvard.

Sheldon came out of Harvard in 1907 with a play called "Salvation Nell" which the Harrison Grey Fiskes bought and Mrs. Fiske produced in 1908. He followed with "The Nigger," which was a decade ahead of its time, "The Boss" and other plays until in 1913 he produced "Romance" and achieved an immediate and lasting box-office popularity.

Unhappily Mr. Sheldon has been held back by an invalidism that has kept him confined to his bed for many years, but he has gone bravely on with his writing, doing many dramatizations, "The Song of Songs" and "The Jest" among them, and several full-length plays. Two years ago he helped Charles MacArthur with the writing of "Lulu Belle" and so has kept in intimate touch with the theatre he loves.

There were other American dramatists who made fair starts under the encouragement that was given native writers during these years. But those I have mentioned were to me outstanding in helping to establish and popularize the native drama.

Some of them wrote one play and stopped. Some of them, succeeding with one, tried a second, a third,

even a fourth and, failing to sell them, grew discouraged. Others came down through the mauve decade to the nineteen-twenties and then retired quietly to the comforts they have earned.

Although my intention was to confine these references only to those who have been recently active in the theatre I found I could not pass the old-timers by without at least a friendly nod in their direction. Only by their works did I know them, but I loved them well for many years.

WE ALSO HAVE WITH US—

An alphabetical tabulation of those playwrights whose careers as writers for the theatre have for one reason or another been temporarily curtailed.

WE ALSO HAVE WITH US—

And now they begin to crowd in, that vast army of produced playwrights with anywhere from two to twenty plays to their credit but whose current activities remove them from the immediate interest of the public for which this volume is primarily designed.

Any one of these may by to-morrow's newspaper be proclaimed the author of a masterpiece of dramatic literature. Anyone of them may be this season's, or next season's, Pulitzer prize winner. And any one, or all, of them may disappear as a name from the theatre records now and no activity of theirs ever be noted again.

Who can predict for example, how soon Edwin Justus Mayer, the successful author of "The Firebrand" of a few seasons back, will bring to market another drama of first-class quality?

Or when Dan Totheroh, the California author, will realize the promise of his "Wild Birds" and add a notable work to the list? Or when Martin Flavin, whose "Children of the Moon" was a much-discussed drama a few seasons back, may not find time and inspiration to write the play his friends feel is "in him."

I have elected not to classify them either according to their past records nor their present promise, but alphabetically, and in this chapter to give such biographical information as may prove informative and interesting. Therefore, we also have with us:

ANDREWS, Charlton. Born, Connersville, Ind., 1878. Attended Indianapolis classical school: later took a PH.B. degree at De Pauw University and spent the next year studying in Paris. Did newspaper work in Chicago and Indianapolis, including dramatic criticism: took summer course at Chicago University and later taught English and French in Indiana high schools, in the State College of Washington, the State Normal school of North Dakota and numerous other schools east and west. Won a MacDowell scholarship in 1910 and took an M.A. at Harvard. Has written two novels, also "The Drama Today" and "The Technique of Playwriting." Play experiences started with "The Interrupted Revels," a MacDowell club pageant, after which he wrote "State Line," "His Majesty the Fool," and "The Torches." Finally, none of these selling, Prof. Andrews decided to go commercial and wrote "Ladies' Night," which, after Avery Hopwood and A. H. Woods finished with its staging, ran for forty-seven weeks in New York and was afterward done as a picture by Jack Mulhall and Dorothy Mackail. This success was followed by "Bluebeard's Eighth Wife," with Ina Claire, "The Dollar Daddy," and "Sam Abramovitch." Only the Claire piece prospered.

BASSHE, Em Jo. Born, Russia, 1900, but left that country at the age of eleven. Educated in high school, Valparaiso, Columbia and Chicago Universities, and spent three years in hoboing and sailoring. His first play was "The Copy Cat's Holiday"; his first production "The Bitter Fantasy" by the

Stage Repertory in Philadelphia. Other plays include "Invitation," "Earth," "The Bitter Fantasy," "The Mountain," "The Star," "Fantasy in Flutes and Figures," "Adam Solataire" and "The Centuries."

BEHRMAN, S. N. Born Worcester, Mass. Developed an early passion for the theatre and autographed photographs of the leading players at the Worcester stock company. Decided then to write for the theatre, and also to act. Did both briefly by writing a sketch for the Poli circuit and acting in it. Sent back to school—at Clark university—he developed a new interest in his studies. Went from Clark to Harvard; studied with Prof. Baker through English 47; graduated with an A.B.; came on to Columbia and added an M.A. Did book reviewing for the New Republic and the N. Y. Times; got into press work, from press work into playwriting; wrote several plays with Kenyon Nicholson; one called "Love Is Like That"; wrote "The Second Man" by himself, was quite surprised when it scored a hit at the Guild; wrote "The Man Who Forgot" with Owen Davis; was not greatly surprised when it failed in Atlantic City.

BLOCH, Bertram, Born New York, 1893. He was educated in the public schools and New York Law School, and later served in a law office. His first inclinations toward the drama came when he was director of a Little Theatre in Washington just before the war. His first play was "Emancipation of Anne," sold but never produced. His first production was "Third Shot." His next "Glory Hallelujah," written with Thomas Mitchell.

BOLTON, Guy Reginald. Born, England. Started out being an architect, but turned to constructing plays instead. His first play, "The Drone," was produced in New York at the 39th St. Theatre in 1911. Douglas Wood was a collaborator. Has been an active playwright since then, having written and helped to write a half hundred plays and musical comedies. "Hit-the-Trail Halliday" was written by Bolton and George Middleton; a series of musical comedies, beginning with "Have a Heart" (with P. G. Wodehouse) were exceptionally popular. "Adam and Eva," "The Light of the World," and "The Cave Girl" (with George Middleton) followed. His later plays have included "Chicken Feed," (also called "Wages for Wives"), "Nobody's Business" (with Frank Mandel), "Grounds for Divorce," (an adaptation), "Oh, Kay," "Rio Rita," (with Fred Thompson), "5 o'Clock Girl" (with Fred Thompson,) and "Rosalie" (with Wm. Anthony McGuire).

BOOTH, John Hunter. Born New Orleans, 1887, from which city he escaped in 1905, after having had a grammar school education and served as a tramp actor. Began to write as a child, his first play being "Fatality"; his first production "The Masquerader" in which Guy Bates Post appeared. Among his other produced works are "Keep Her Smiling," "Rolling Home," "The Hurricane," "No Trespassing," "The Winged Messenger," "Brass Buttons" and "Wolves."

BRADLEY, Lillian Trimble. Born near Milton, Ky., in 1875. Educated in Paris, France. David Belasco

bought her first play, "Beating Back," but never produced it. Her second was "Mr. Myd's Mystery," which Joseph Brooks presented with Taylor Holmes. There followed "As Others See Us," and "The Wonderful Thing," with Jeanne Eagles. Mrs. Bradley collaborated with George Broadhurst in the writing of "Izzy," "The Red Falcon" and "The Woman on the Index." A recent work, "The Crimson Strain," is being held for production.

Brooks, George S. Born February, 1895, on a farm at Pearl Creek, New York. Educated at Middlebury Academy, Salt Lake Collegiate Institute, Warsaw High School, the University of Rochester, and, while in the army, the University of Poitiers, France. Has done newspaper and magazine editorial work. The theatre first entered his life when he was expelled from boarding school for going to see "The Rose of the Rancho." He is co-author of "Spread Eagle" with Walter Lister, of "Celebrity," with Willard Keefe, and of "The Whip Hand," with Marjorie Chase. He also wrote "For Two Cents" which has been scheduled for production. "Spread Eagle" was his first play to reach Broadway.

Brown, Martin—real name Meredith Gibson Brown, which he changed because he was tired of being addressed as "Dear Miss Brown." Born Montreal, Canada, about 1888. Educated in high school there and at Sargent's Dramatic School in New York. As his mother loved the theatre, he received parental aid in his ambition to become an actor. His first play and production was "A Very Good Young Man," which Arthur Hopkins produced in 1918.

Among his other plays have been "The Exciters," "The Love Child" (an adaptation) "The Lady," "Great Music," "Cobra," "The Dark," "The Strawberry Blonde," "Praying Curve" and "Paris," the Irene Bordoni show. His first monetary success was "The Lady," which he thought was a good, honest melodrama.

BROWNE, Porter Emerson. Born Beverly, Mass., 1880, but moved to Newton at the age of eight, where he attended grammar school and the Newton High School. His only college, he says, was journalism, in which he gained practical experience. As his father was a playwright, he turned naturally to writing for the theatre. His first play was "A Fool There Was," and he also wrote "The Spendthrift," "The Bad Man," "Married" and other minor plays more or less successful.

BURNET, Trink Dana. Born, Cincinnati, O., 1888, his ancestors having settled the town for that purpose. He went to Avondale public and Woodward high schools, made Cornell, 1907. College of law: edited "Cornell Widow" in senior year: out of college to job as reporter on N. Y. Evening Sun. First play was "The Habitual Husband." Other plays, "Four Walls," (with George Abbott): "Rain," (in one-act, never claimed priority of title); "Behind the Blue Curtain," "Pierrot Steals the Moon," "Triangles." His first success was "Four Walls."

BURNS, Bernard K. Born Johnstown, New York, 1881. Educated at various preparatory schools, including Colgate Academy, Hamilton, New York. Served in the Philippines in the regular army. His first play

and production was "The Woman on the Jury," and he also wrote "Tread of Men," which Sam H. Harris once owned.

BUSSIERE, Tadema, (nee Whaley). Born Oakland, Cal., 1891, but moved to the sagebrush part of the State of Washington at the age of three, and remained there until married. Took up the writing of plays in order to get close to her first love, acting, and the theatre in general. Her first play, "Once Upon a Time" was never produced; her second, "A Friendly Divorce" was staged in Brooklyn by the Blaneys. Others are "The Open Gate," "Claudine," "Fine Daddy" and "Gertie."

CAESAR, Arthur. Born in Roumania in 1892, but came to this country at what is generally known as an early age. He was educated in the New York public schools and at several universities, including New York University. He first began to write one-act plays, "Napoleon's Barber," etc. His first play and production was "Out of the Seven Seas," and among the others are "Off Key," "The Maker of Images," "Madame Judas" and "When the Dead Get Gay."

CARB, David. Born Fort Worth, Texas, about 1892. Educated there and at Harvard. Always wanted to write plays. His first work, he says, is too remote for remembrance. "The Voice of the People" was his first production, and among his other plays are "Immodest Violet," "A Very Proper Lady," "Face Value," "The First Lady," "The Kiss," "A Way With Women," and "Queen Victoria" (with Walter Prichard Eaton).

CARROLL, Earl. Born, Pittsburg, Pa., 36 years ago. Went to work early as an usher in Pittsburg theatres. Did a vast amount of travelling in and out of show business: spent a part of the time in the Orient. Took to song writing, later to lyrics and librettos and finally to plays. Has produced ten dramatic and thirteen musical entertainments and thirteen of them have been financially successful. Among the Carroll output were "Pretty Mrs. Smith," "So Long Letty," "Canary Cottage," "The Lady of the Lamp," and six editions of the "Carroll Vanities."

CLEMENS, LeRoy LaRue. Born Brooklyn, N. Y., 1889, but left as soon as he was able to negotiate Brooklyn Bridge. His youth was spent in Lakeside and Port Clinton, Ohio. Attended Rock Ridge Hall School in Massachusetts. Entered the theatre as an actor. Among his plays are "Watch Your Neighbor," "Love On Account," "Young Mr. Dudley," "After the Rain," "The Poppy God," "Aloma of the South Seas," "Alias the Deacon" and "The World Loves a Winner" (several of these collaborations). His first production was "Watch Your Neighbor" with Leon Gordon and his first success "Aloma of the South Seas."

COLLISON, Wilson. Born Glouster, Ohio, 1892, but moved to Columbus at the age of five where he was educated in the public schools. Then he went into the drug business as a registered pharmacist and small store owner in Columbus. His first play was written at the age of 18 when a member of the Courtney Morgan Rep Company. Since then he has written not less than 200, (many of them collabora-

tions) including "Kitty Comes Home," "Every Little Thing," "The Girl with Carmine Lips," "Desert Sands," "The Vagabond," "She Got What She Wanted," "Up In Mabel's Room," "A Bachelor's Night," "The Girl in the Limousine," "Getting Gertie's Garter" and "Red Dust." His first success was "Up in Mabel's Room."

CONNORS, Barry. Born in Oil City, Pa., in 1883, but moved to Scranton at the age of twelve, where he attended public schools and St. Thomas College. At eighteen studied law and was admitted to New York State bar in 1903. Always stage struck and spent fifteen years in show business as comedian, song and dance man and eccentric hoofer, in musical tabloids, stock and vaudeville. In 1916 he was barred from that latter branch of the theatre because of activities in the vaudeville strike, and is still on the blacklist. In 1917 went prospecting in the high Sierras and stayed there nearly five years. Wrote five plays, four of which were produced, his first being "Mad Honeymoon." Other plays are "Strange Bedfellows," "Hell's Bells," "Applesauce" and "The Patsy."

CULLINAN, Ralph. Born Ennis, County Clare, Ireland, 1887, and educated there. Came to America in 1908 and did various odd jobs. Was a bar-tender when America went into the war, and enlisted with Ninth Infantry, Second Division, regular army. Saw active service and was twice wounded. Returning to New York, he found bartenders were no longer in demand, so he turned to writing plays. First of these was "Honest Lodgings," produced by the

Celtic Players in New York. First Broadway production was "Loggerheads." Among his other plays are "Magpies," "Black Waters," "You Can't Win," and collaborated in "The Banshee," "Terror" and "The Winding Road."

CUNNINGHAM, Leon Max. Born Leslie, Michigan, 1899. Educated in the public schools and at the University of Michigan. His first play "The Broker's Cousin" was produced when he was twelve in a garage at Saginaw; he still has the reviews to prove it. Norman-Bel Geddes was ousted from this youthful theatrical group as one for whom there was little hope. Among his other works are "Mr. Mundy," "Courage, Camille," "Neighbors," "Sweetheart" and "Hospitality," which was his first New York production.

CUSHING, Catherine Chisholm. Born, Ohio. Left the state of her birth at school age and was educated in private schools at Washington, D. C. Took to writing and was for a time editor of Harper's Bazaar. Has always lived, she says, in a make-believe world and was trying to make it real in the drama at a comparatively early age. Her first play was "Miss Ananias." "The Real Thing," "Kitty MacKaye," "Jerry," "Widow by Proxy," (for May Irwin): "Pollyanna," "Lassie," "Glorianna," "Marjolaine," an adaptation of "Pomander Walk:" "Topsy and Eva," (for the Duncan sisters): "Edgar Allan Poe," "Master of the Inn," an adaptation, followed.

DAVIS, Irving Kaye. Born New York City, 1900, and attended public and high schools. A former news-

paperman. His two produced plays are "The Right to Dream" and "Veils."

De Costa, Leon Pablo. Born, Barcelona, Spain, in 1886. Educated at the Royal College, Leipzig, the Academy of Music, Danzig, and the Royal Academy of Music, Berlin. First play, "The Monkey Man" was produced in 1920 in Germany and France. His first American work was the lyrics and music for "Fifty-fifty Ltd," at the Comedy Theatre, New York. Also author of "Page Miss Venus," "Inn Mates," "Kosher Kitty Kelly" and "The Blonde Sinner," of which "Kosher Kitty Kelly" was his biggest success.

Delf, Harry. Born New York City, 1895. Educated in public schools, College of the City of New York and Columbia. Wanted to become an actor after having won a New York City Medal for declamation. Appeared in vaudeville, where his sister, Miss Juliet, is a headliner and wrote musical comedy books, among them "Sun Showers" and "Some Night." His plays are "The Family Upstairs" and "Atlas and Eva."

Dicky, Paul. Born Chicago, 1884. Educated at the University of Michigan where his footsteps were directed toward the drama through his work with the Michigan Comedy Club. His first play was "The Ghost Breaker"; the others include "The Misleading Lady," "The Backslapper," "The Last Laugh," "The Broken Wing" and "The Lincoln Highwayman." He started pretty well from scratch because "The Ghost Breaker" was a success.

Dos Passos, John. Born Chicago, 1896. Graduated

from Harvard in 1918. He is a well known novelist, and his plays include "The Moon Is a Gong," and "Airways, Inc."

DUDLEY, Bide. Although he doesn't want it generally known, his real name is Walter Bronson Dudley. Born in Minneapolis, Minn., he was taken to Leavenworth, Kan., at the age of one year. He was educated in the public schools, later became a telegraph operator and then turned to newspaper work. Is now dramatic editor of the New York Evening World. His first theatrical work was as co-author with Jack Norworth of "Odds and Ends of 1917." All of his plays except "Oh, Henry," "All Square" and "The Man on the End" with Fulton Oursler, have been musical. They include "The Little Whopper," "Come Along," "Sue, Dear," "The Matinee Girl," and "Bye, Bye, Bonnie."

ELLIS, Edith. Born, Coldwater, Mich. The region had been colonized by her maternal ancestors. Her father, Edward C. Ellis and her mother, Ruth McCarthy, were of the stage and their daughter was a member of their company almost before she knew it. At 10 she was a star and by the time she was 12 two plays had been written for her. She began writing plays in her teens, but not until ten years later did she take up the work seriously. Thereafter her experiences were varied and practical. She did everything there was to do in the production of the play, from painting the scenery to directing the play and playing the leading rôle. In the early nineties she wrote "Mrs. B. O'Shaughnessy" for George Monroe. In 1904 she wrote and produced "The

Point of View." "Man and his Mate" followed, and then one of her profitable ventures, "Mary Jane's Pa," in which both Henry Dixey and Max Figman starred at different times. Since then Miss Ellis has written some thirty plays that have been produced, the more important in her list including a dramatization of "Anna Karanina," "The Lottery Man," "He Fell in Love with His Wife," "Seven Sisters," an adaptation in which Laurette Taylor and Charles Cherry were starred: "The Man Higher Up," "The Devil's Garden," with Lyn Harding and Lillian Albertson: "Personality," written with Arthur Shaw: "Sonya," with Violet Heming and Otto Kruger, "White Collars," which was a big success on the Pacific coast, and "The Love Thief."

ENTRIKIN, Knowles. Born Moline, Ill, 1891. Educated Moline public schools and Beloit College, after which he became a newspaper reporter, actor and director. Is an authority on marionettes, having staged all recent Tony Sarg shows and written some of them. His plays include "The Small Timers," "Seed of the Brute," "Back to Grandmother" and "All the Way," the first two of which have been produced in New York.

EYRE, Lawrence. Born, Chester, Pa. Privately educated, and his only inclinations toward work were in the direction of music and the theatre. Among his plays are "The Things That Count," his first success; "Driftwood," "Miss Nelly O' N'Orleans," "Martinique," "The Merry Wives of Gotham," "The Steam Roller."

FALLON, Thomas F. Born Boston, 1889. Educated private schools, St. Francis Xavier and American Academy. His early inclinations were toward the church, although at the age of seven he had begun to regale the neighbors with his own versions of "East Lynne" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin." His first play was "Winter and Spring" for William H. Crane. Other plays include "Law of the Plains," "The Wasp," "In and Out" and "The Last Warning." This last named was his first success.

FIELD, Edward Salisbury. Born in California. Wrote "Twin Beds" and later "Wedding Bells," both with Margaret Mayo. "Good Intentions," (1910) was his first play, "Zander the Great," with Alice Brady, his best play.

FLAVIN, Martin. Born, San Francisco, 1883. Attended University of Chicago. Went into trade in Chicago and moved out long enough to write "Children of the Moon," which proved a minor sensation in New York in 1923. His other plays include "Lady of the Rose," "Service for Two" and "Shucks," as well as several short plays.

FORREST, Sam. Born Richmond Va., 1870. His family moved to Texas. Out of school had to hustle for a living. Tried everything from bell hopping and railroading to playwriting. He broke into the theatre in 1891, joined Cohan and Harris in 1910 and has been with one or the other ever since. His first play and production was "Word of Honor." He also wrote "Paid," collaborated on "Red Light Annie" and "Thoroughbreds," and has revamped dozens of others, including many of the biggest successes.

FRANKLIN, Pearl (Mrs. Wallace Clark). Born in Bedford, Iowa, about 1888. Escaped to Chicago in infancy and grew up in village of Franklin Park, Ill. Attended Lewis Institute and was a member of George Pierce Baker's class at Radcliffe for a year. Reviewed books for Chicago Tribune and sold short stories to Pictorial Review and other publications. First play was "Young America," with Fred Ballard which also ran for four or five years in vaudeville in a one-act version. Other plays were "Thunder," with Elia Peattie (also known as "Howdy, Folks"), "Following Father" and "Cowboy Crazy" (with George Abbott).

GLASPELL, Susan (Mrs. George Cram Cook). Born, Davenport, Ia., in the early eighties. Did newspaper reporting and became a consistent contributor to the magazines. Later, with her husband, was active in the organization and conduct of the Provincetown Players, the organization responsible for the introduction of Eugene O'Neill's plays to New York and the world. Her plays include "Trifles," "Suppressed Desires," "Bernice," "Inheritors," "Verge" and "The Road to the Temple." An unproduced work, "The Comic Artist," was written with Norman Matson.

GOLDING, Samuel Ruskin. Born Ozery, Russia, 1891, but was brought to Rhode Island at the age of ten months. Educated at Brown University and New York Law School. His first definite desire to write a play came after he had tried his first case, which seemed to be a drama in the playing. His initial play was a dramatization of "The Silver Horde," Rex

Beach's novel. Other plays are "Open House," "Pryamids," "The Black Cockatoo," "New York," "Divorce A La Carte" and "The Lady From Abroad," musical comedy. He also is co-author of "The Bronx Express" and "The Unknown Woman."

GOODHUE, Willis Maxwell. Born Akron, Ohio, April, 1880. He got most of his schooling on his father's ranch in North Dakota. Came to New York twenty-five years ago and wrote a farce comedy for the late Roland Reed and, upon the actor's death, presented it himself. Continued for fifteen years as manager and press agent. This first play was "A Battle Scarred Hero," afterward known as "Hello, Bill." Other plays include "Dust," "Myrtie," "All Wet," "Head First" and "Katy Did."

GOODRICH, Arthur Frederick. Born, New Britain, Conn., 1878. Graduated with a Ph.B. from Wesleyan University in 1889, and got an honorary M.A. the same year. Afterward went into editorial work, editing the World's Work in 1901–03, and the Outing Magazine the two years following. He later represented Outing in London and held other executive editorial jobs for Doubleday, Page & Co. His plays include "Yes and No," "So This Is London," "You Don't Understand" and "Caponssachi," (with Rose A. Palmer), a dramatization of Browning's "The Ring and the Book," which was awarded the Theatre Club gold medal as the best play of the year in 1926, following Walter Hampden's production.

GORDON, Kilbourn. Born Washington, D. C., about 1890. He was a drama reviewer in that city, and later became an actor with stock companies in the

capital city. He next entered the theatre as manager and press agent for William A. Brady, Mrs. Henry B. Harris and others. The first play in which he had a share of the authorship was "Enemies Within." He next collaborated on "The Man Outside" and "Big Game." He is also co-author, with the late Chester DeVonde, of "Kongo."

GREW, William. Born Philadelphia, 1887, and moved to Minneapolis when he was too young to protest. His first play was written for his class in high school. His plays include "The Sap," "The Mating Season," "The Smart Alec." He also did the book for "Florida Girl," a musical comedy, and many numbers and sketches for five editions of the "Vanities."

GROPPER, Milton Herbert. Born New York, 1897. Attended Erasmus Hall High School and Columbia University. Wanted to become a magician at the age of nine, but this gave way in time to a desire to become a producer. He compromised by becoming a newspaper man for a brief interval and then joined the Navy. He wrote several one-act plays, and his other work includes "Gypsy Jim" and "New Toys," both with Oscar Hammerstein II, "Ladies of the Evening," "We Americans" and "Mirrors."

HARBACH, Otto Abels. Born Salt Lake City, 1873. Attended Knox College and Columbia University. His first play was called "The Daughter of the Desert"; the first of his work to be produced was "Three Twins." Is one of the best known musical comedy librettists working in the Broadway theatre, among his books and adaptations having been those of "Madame Sherry," "The Wall Street Girl,"

"The Firefly," "High Jinks," "Katinka," "Going Up," "Tumble In," "Tickle Me," "Mary," "Jimmie," "The O'Brien Girl," "Kid Boots," "No, No, Nanette" and "Rose-Marie." He has also written or collaborated upon several plays.

HATTONS, The. Fanny and Frederic. Mr. Hatton, after leaving Wisconsin University, became a newspaper reporter in Chicago and was later appointed drama critic of the Evening Post. Mrs. Hatton (Fanny Locke) assisted him with the work. Together they wrote plays, beginning with "Years of Discretion" in 1912, and following this with "The Song Bird," "Squab Farm," "Upstairs and Down," "Lombardi Ltd," "The Indestructible Wife," "The Walkoffs," "The Checkerboard," "Playthings," "Treat 'Em Rough," and "Synthetic Sin."

HECHT, Ben. Born, New York, 1893. Attended high school in Racine, Wis. Became a newspaper man in Chicago in 1910. Later publisher of the Literary Times. Attracted attention with the novel, "Eric Dorn" in 1921. His plays include "The Egotist," played by Leo Ditrichstein; "The Stork," an adaptation, and "The Front Page," written with Charles MacArthur.

HODGE, William. Born, Albion, N. Y., 1874. Took to acting as soon as he could get away from the public schools and toured the small town territories of Pennsylvania and New York playing repertory. Got to New York in a Lincoln J. Carter melodrama, "The Heart of Chicago": played farce with the Rogers brothers and was finally chosen by James A. Herne for the rôle of Freeman Whitmarsh in "Sag

Harbor." This first hit led the way to his Stubbins in "Mrs. Wiggs" and Pike in the "Man from Home." Finding it difficult to land parts that fitted him Mr. Hodge began writing them for himself. Under a pen name he wrote "The Road to Happiness," "A Cure for Curables," "For All of Us," "The Judge's Husband," and "Straight Through the Door." Married Helen Hale, actress, and is rearing his family near New York.

HOUSUM, Robert. Born Cleveland, Ohio, 1887. Graduated from Yale in 1908 and took his M.A. degree in 1911. His first play was "In Glass Houses," written in collaboration with Charles Hopkins, and others include "Sylvia Runs Away," "Winding Stairs," "Persons Unknown," and "Maid Errant"; his first success, "The Gypsy Trail."

JACKSON, Fred. Took kindly to the writing of farce in 1915, producing "A Full House." Followed with the usual list of creditable attempts to top the success of that play. These included "The Naughty Wife," "La, La Lucille," "The Hole in the Wall," "Two Little Girls in Blue," and "Cold Feet," (with Pierre Gendron).

KALLESSER, Michael. Born Freeland, Pa., 1889. Left home at the age of eleven to be an actor, but failed; then took up writing. First play was "The Ingrate" produced on the road with Lillian Foster. Other road plays include "What Might Have Been" and "A Chance Every Girl Takes." Has New York productions of "One Man's Woman," "Trial Marriage" and "Marriage on Approval," the first of which lasted longest.

KENNEDY, Aubrey. Born Winnipeg, Canada, 1888. Educated Winnipeg schools and St. Mary's College, Dayton, Ohio. Has written or collaborated upon "Seeing Things," "Loving Ladies" and "Behold This Dreamer." Mr. Kennedy claims that all his plays have been artistic, if not always box-office, successes.

KENNEDY, Charles Rann. Born Derby, England, 1871. Educated at home until eleven, then about a year at Saltley College School, Saltley, Warwickshire. Earned own living from age of 13, and did a lot of acting up to the age of 26 while earning his living in other lines of endeavor. Then began a professional career as actor and manager. His first professionally produced play was "What Men Dare," a melodrama; is best known for "The Servant in the House." Other plays include "The Winterfeast," "The Idol-Breaker," "The Rib of the Man," "The Army With Banners," "The Fool from the Hills," "The Terrible Meek," "The Necessary Evil" "The Chastening," "The Admiral," "The Salutation" and "Old Nobody." Has appeared in several of these with his wife, Edith Wynne Matthison.

KENNEDY, Mary (Mrs. Deems Taylor) Born in Claxton, Georgia, something—she admits—over twenty-one years ago. Educated public schools and convents in Jacksonville, Fla., and at St. Mary's in Augusta, Ga. Came to New York in 1919; did newspaper and magazine work and, in due course of events, began to write plays. Her first production was "Mrs. Partridge Presents," written with Ruth Hawthorne. Also wrote "Captain Fury," which Otis

Skinner tried out but did not bring to New York and "Jordan," produced in London. Has been an actress in many successful plays.

KINKEAD, Cleves. Born Louisville, 1882. Attended private schools, Centre College, Harvard and Oxford. Studied law and also worked as reporter on the Louisville Post, the St. Louis Republic and the old New York Press. While in New York developed first interest in theatre when he was assigned to review openings and do theatrical reporting. First play was "The Foreflushers," produced by the Harvard Dramatic Club. First professional production was "Common Clay," which won the Harvard Prize. Only other play since then was "The Mood of the Moon," which was tried out in 1920 and presented in New York under another title in 1922.

KIRKPATRICK, John. Born Montgomery, Alabama, 1896. Attended Montgomery schools and University of Alabama, and got into the theatre as stage manager, company manager and director. First production was "Fool Woman" which never came to Broadway. First success was "The Book of Charm," later shortened to "Charm."

KNOBLOCK, Edward. Born New York 1874. Mr. Knoblock was educated at Harvard but later became a naturalized British subject. Became an actor and played several parts in the early nineties. Took to playwriting as early as 1925. His first play "The Club Baby" attracted attention with "The Shulamite," which Lena Ashwell brought to America in 1906; did a translation of "Sister Beatrice" in 1910; wrote "The Faun," "Kismet" and "Milestones"

(with Arnold Bennett;) "My Lady's Dress," "Marie Odile," "Paginini," (which George Arliss played); "Tiger! Tiger!" for Frances Starr; "The Lullaby," (Florence Reed), "Simon Called Peter" (with Jules Eckert Goodman;) "Speakeasy," (with George Rosener), and "The Mulberry Bush."

KUMMER, Clare Beecher. Among her ancestors she numbers Harriet Beecher Stowe and Henry Ward Beecher. In 1906 Miss Kummer wrote a song called "Dearie." That started it. But she did not get to playwriting until six years later, when she wrote "The Opera Ball" with Sydney Rosenfeld. Her more notable contributions to the theatre came still later, beginning in 1916 with "Good Gracious, Annabelle," which was followed a year later by "A Successful Calamity," in which William Gillette played; "The Rescuing Angel," "Be Calm, Camilla," "Rollo's Wild Oat," "Bridges" and several short plays. Her more recent plays have included "Banco," an adaptation; a musical piece called "One Kiss," also an adaptation; another "Annie Dear," in which Florenz Ziegfeld presented Billie Burke; the adaptation of "Mme Pompadour," and a straight comedy, "Pomeroy's Past."

KUMMER, Frederic Arnold. Born Catonsville, Md., near Baltimore, 1874. Attended Baltimore Schools, Baltimore City College and and Rensselaer Polytechnic, Troy, N. Y. First play "Mr. Buttles," written during odd moments of a business career in 1907; other plays include "The Other Woman," "The Brute," "The Painted Woman," "The Magic Melody" (with Sigmund Romberg): "My Golden

Girl" (with Victor Herbert): "The Bonehead" and "The Voice."

LASKA, Edward. Born New York, 1884. Attended public schools and the College of the City of New York. Began to write lyrics and music for musical comedies, concert and vaudeville at the age of sixteen, Manager of the Shuberts' music publishing department, 1908–10. First long play was "We've Got to Have Money," produced in 1923.

LAWSON, John Howard. Born New York, 1895. Graduated from Williams College, 1914. First play called "Standards" sold to Cohan and Harris in 1914, but produced three years later under another name by another manager; first produced play "Servant-Master-Lover" done by Oliver Morosco in Los Angeles in 1917. Other plays include "Roger Bloomer," "Processional," "Nirvana," "Loudspeaker" and "The International." "Processional," produced by the Theatre Guild is probably the best known and attained the greatest success.

LE BARON, William. Born Elgin, Ill., 1884, which place he left to attend the University of Chicago and never returned. Also went to New York University where he and Deems Taylor were drafted to write the annual college show. This was successful and they turned out three more, the last of which, "The Echo," was given a professional production by Charles Dillingham in 1910. "The Very Idea" was his first play; others include "Back to Earth," "Nobody's Money," "The Scarlet Woman," "I Love You." Also wrote several musical comedies, among them "Her Regiment" (with Victor Herbert):

"Apple Blossoms" (with Fritz Kreisler and Victor Jacobi): "The Love Letter" (with Victor Jacobi): and "The Half Moon" (with Victor Jacobi). "The Very Idea" was his first successful non-musical play.

LESTER, Elliott. Born Hoboken, N. J., 1894. Educated at the University of Pennsylvania, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa; now teaching English literature in Philadelphia. Plays include "The Mud Turtle," "Take My Advice" and "The Medicine Man."

LINDSAY, Howard. Born Waterford, N. Y., 1889, but was taken to Atlantic City at the age of three, and later to Boston. Educated Boston Latin School; had a year at Harvard. Went into the theatre at eighteen; had started in that direction at the age of four when he began taking elocution lessons of a teacher who owed his uncle, publisher of the Atlantic City Daily Union, money for advertising. Was co-author of "Tommy," which was his first production, but has worked in the theatre in many other capacities.

LIPMAN, Clara (Mrs. Louis Mann). Born Chicago, Ill., as long ago as a lady likes to remember. Deserted private schools to study with tutors. Began her playwriting career with "Julie Bon Bon," played in it with Louis Mann both in New York and London. Later wrote "The Lady from Westchester," "His Protégé," "The Temperamental Girl," "Billy With a Punch." With Samuel Shipman she wrote "Elevating a Husband," "It Depends on the Woman," "Children of Today," "The Royal Maid," "Flames and Embers" and "The Head of the House."

LISTER, Walter. Born Cleveland, Ohio, 1900. Attended Denison University, Brown University, Universite de Poitiers (France) and Harvard. Has done, and is still doing, newpaper work. He was co-author with George S. Brooks of "Spread Eagle," which was his first play.

LOCKE, Edward. Born in England in 1869; settled in America in 1882. Became an actor, played in many stock companies and took to writing for the theatre with "A Mad Love," which didn't land, and followed with "The Climax," which did. Afterward did "The Case of Becky," which David Belasco produced with Frances Starr as a girl of dual personalities. He later wrote "The Land of the Free," "The Dancer," (with Louis Anspacher and Max Marcin), "The Woman Who Laughed," "Mike Angelo," for Leo Carillo, the book for "The Love Call," a musical comedy, and "57 Bowery."

MACARTHUR, Charles. Born Scranton, Pa., 1897. Son of a Unitarian clergyman. Attended theological seminary for two years, the reaction carrying him into newspaper work, specifically newspaper work that eventually made him a feature writer for William Randolph Hearst in Chicago. He has collaborated on three plays, two proving popular successes and the third a fairly popular failure. The first was "Lulu Belle," written with Edward Sheldon, his uncle; the second "Salvation," written with Sidney Howard, and the third "The Front Page," written with Ben Hecht.

MACHUGH, Augustin. Born New York. Was a stock actor working in the Keith and Proctor companies

when he wrote "Officer 666," afterward staged successfully by Winchell Smith and George Cohan. Afterward wrote several non-successful dramas, "Value Received," "What Would You Do?" "Search Me," and "The Meanest Man in the World," which George Cohan produced and in which he played in New York.

MANKIEWICZ, Herman J. Born New York, 1898. Educated Harry Hillman Academy, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., and Columbia University, where he was dramatic critic of "The Columbia Spectator." Turned to newspaper work, and was Berlin correspondent of the Chicago Tribune. Also served on the staff of the New York World and in the dramatic department of the New York Times. First play and production, "The Good Fellow" (with George S. Kaufman): also "The Wild Man of Borneo" (with Marc Connelly) and "We, The People."

MAPES, Victor. Born New York, 1871. Educated at Morse's School, Columbia University and Sorbonne University (Paris). Wanted to become a dramatist, and after one year as reporter on the New York Sun went to Paris for the purpose of studying playwriting and French methods. First play and production, "Don Caesar's Return," presented by the late James K. Hackett in 1901. Other plays include "Captain Barrington," "The Undercurrent," "No. 6, Washington Square," "The New Henrietta," "The Boomerang," "The Lasso," "The Hottentot," "The Kangaroo." Many of these plays were written with other authors, Winchell Smith having been a frequent collaborator.

MARCIN, Max. Born Germany, 1879. Came to America as a child. Went through the New York public schools and thence into newspaper work. Became a contributor to magazines. In 1915 wrote "The House of Glass" with George M. Cohan. Followed with "Eyes of Youth," "Cheating Cheaters," "Here Comes the Bride," "The Woman in Room 13," and "Silence." His latest plays, three of which he has himself produced, are "Three Live Ghosts" (with Frederick Isham): "The Night-cap" (with Guy Bolton): "One A. M." (with Samuel Shipman): "Give and Take," "Badges," (with Edward Hammond): and "Los Angeles," (with Donald Ogden Stewart.)

MARQUIS, Donald Robert Perry. Born Walnut, Ill., in the late seventies. Went south to live and work on newspapers. Took to writing sketches, short stories, poems and columns. These eventually brought him to New York and fame. Wrote a play around one of his popular column characters, "The Old Soak." That was the first year he ever took the income tax seriously. Later wrote a Biblical drama, "The Dark Hours," and "Out of the Sea."

MATTHEWS, Adelaide. Born Kenduskeag, Me., in 1886 but removed at the age of 1 and grew up in Massachusetts. Left high school and took to the stage to the expressed distress of her family. Wrote "Hearts Desire" and "Just Married" with Ann Nichols, who later wrote "Abie's Irish Rose": wrote "Nightie Night," "Scrambled Wives," "The Teaser," and "Puppy Love" with Martha Stanley. Her first success was "Nightie Night."

MAYER, Edwin Justus. Born New York City, 1897. Attended the New York public schools. Wrote his first play, "The Mountain Top," when he was 22. His first production was "The Firebrand" in 1924. Since then he has written "Children of Darkness" and sold it to the Theatre Guild.

MAYO, Margaret. Born Illinois in the early eighties. Through various public schools and thence to Stanford University, California. Out of Stanford played in "Arizona," met and married Edgar Selwyn. They were divorced later. Continued to act until 1903 when she decided to sink or swim as a playwright. Adapted "Under Two Flags," "The Jungle" and "The Marriage of William Ashe" from the novels bearing the same titles. Wrote "The Winding Way" and scored a big success with "Polly of the Circus." Followed this a couple of seasons later with "Baby Mine," and "Twin Beds" (with Salisbury Field), and "His Bridal Night." Has spent the last several years in California.

MEDCRAFT, Russell Graham. Born Matla, Cal., 1900. Attended public schools and the University of California. Became an actor—he says a bad one—at the age of sixteen, and turned to playwriting with a dramatization of the Bible. Wrote "Duty," "The Swordsman," "Buy, Buy Baby," "Bobbie, Be Honest" and "Cradle Snatchers" (with Norma Mitchell) His first production and greatest success was "Cradle Snatchers."

MERLIN, Frank. Born Cork, Ireland, 1893, from which place he came, by grace of the Cunard Line, to America in 1910. Here he worked in the theatre

as super, property boy, wardrobe master, chorus boy, actor and director. First, but still unproduced play was a biographical drama about John Howard Payne who wrote "Home, Sweet Home." Other plays include "Triple Crossed," "The King Can Do No Wrong," "Keep Moving," "The New Gallantry" (with Brian Marlowe) and "The Brown Derby," a musical comedy.

McCormick, Arthur Langdon. Born Port Huron, Mich., and educated at the Albion college. Became an actor, toured a couple of seasons with Otis Skinner and then began writing melodramas for his own use through the middle west. He began with "The Western Girl" and "Money and the Woman," later achieved notice with "Out of the Fold" and "Wanted by the Police." Gained a reputation for the building and operation of startling scenic effects, a fire scene in "When the World Sleeps," a forest fire in "The Storm," a wreck in "Shipwrecked," etc.

McEvoy, Joseph Patrick. Born New York City, January 10, 1895. Raised in Southern Illinois. Attended public and parochial schools, had one year at Christian Brothers' College, St. Louis, and two years at the University of Notre Dame. At 15 was a contributor to the South Bend News: later reporter and feature writer for Chicago papers, including the Tribune, Record-Herald, and American. Sold much stuff to the syndicates. Adapted "The Potters" from his newspaper sketches: produced by Richard Herndon in New York in 1923. Followed with "The Comic Supplement," "Americana," "God Loves Us," "Allez-oop" and sketches for "Ziegfeld Follies."

McGowan, John Wesley. Born Muskegon, Mich., 1894. Attended Muskegon High School and then went to Chicago where he drifted into the theatre, with which both his parents had been connected. Was an actor—"one of the worst singing juveniles Ziegfeld ever complained about," he says. His first play was "A Well Kept Man"; his first production "Mama Loves Papa." Others are "Tenth Avenue," "Excess Baggage," and "Middle West," to be tried out. Of them "Excess Baggage," a play of vaudeville, was his biggest success.

McGuire, William Anthony. Born Chicago, 1889. Attended school at Notre Dame, Ind. "My irregularity and deficiency as a student," writes Mr. McGuire, "were the only encouraging factors of my youth. My aversion to work was one of the first examples of a complex to be recorded." He wrote a first play at 16 and had it printed; much surprised that no one wanted to produce it. At school he wrote "The Walls of Wall Street" and Allan Dwan of the movies played the leading rôle. "The Heights" was his first New York production, followed eventually by "Six Cylinder Love," "Everyman's Castle," "It's a Boy," "Kid Boots," "12 Miles Out," "If I Was Rich," "Rosalie" and "Three Musketeers." In the West Mr. McGuire's play "Divorce" ran for nearly a season in Chicago and was later played by four companies on the road.

McLaurin, Kate (Mrs. Frederick Calvin). Born in Benton, Miss., in what she admits was the mauve decade. Moved at an early age to Helena, Ark., at which place and at the Anne Morgan School in

Chicago she was educated. She showed early talent for the stage, and her mother assisted her in getting there via the elocution route. Was in New York and playing in a production of the late Henry B. Harris before she was twenty. Later put all she had seen of the stage into a novel, "The Least Resistance." Her first play and production was "When We Are Young"; others are "The Six-Fifty," "Whispering Wires," "It All Depends," "Caught" and "The Alien Breed"—the last announced by the Actors' Theatre, but not produced as yet. First success was "Whispering Wires," a mystery play.

MOORE, McElbert. Born in Boston, 1895, but spent most of his youth in Waltham, Mass. Educated Mass. Agricultural College and Harvard. Did newspaper work on Boston Record, dramatic editor of Boston Advertiser, then got to France where he wrote several soldier shows. First play was "The Petulant Princess," an extravaganza. Others were "Hanky Panky Land," "Spice of 1922," "Hello, Everybody," "Plain Jane," "Innocent Eyes," "The Matinee Girl," "A Night in Paris" and "Happy," all musical shows. First production was "Hanky Panky Land," first success "Plain Jane."

MORRISON, Anne. Born Shoals, Indiana, at a date that is neither very recent nor very far off. Educated in high school, normal college, kindergarten school and dramatic academy. Has always been interested in the theatre and aways trying to write. First play was "The Wild Wescotts"; first success "Pigs," (with Patterson McNitt). Also has written "Wilbur," scheduled to be produced this year.

MULLALLY, Don Hiram. Born St. Louis, Mo., 1888, from which place he escaped at the age of three months with a not very articulate vow never to return. As his people were of the theatre, he became an actor, and appeared here, there and everywhere. A hatred of plays in which he had to appear in little girl rôles turned him, while a boy, to writing dramas in which no little girls took part. His first production was "Maggie," afterward "The Desert Flower"; his first success "Conscience." Is also the author of "Wanted" and one or two others.

OLIVER, Roland (pen name for Henry White). Born Hartford, Conn., 1876, spent the first ten years of his life in Paris. Educated at St. Paul's, Concord, N. H., and high school in Kansas. Formed a passion for theatre during his boyhood in Paris; first play was "A Domestic Cyclone," renamed "The Kid," which had a season on the road in the late 90's. Other plays "Little Face," produced by Holbrook Blinn's company at Princess Theatre, New York, 1914, "Good Night Paul," "Night Hawk," "Sunshine," "Baby Blue," "Behind the Footlights" and "Fast Workers."

OSBORN, Lincoln A. Born Oakland, Cal., 1880. Educated public schools and Oakland Polytechnic. He began as an usher at the age of nine; has been acting and directing for twenty years and "play doctoring" for ten. His first play was "The Avenger" written at the age of fourteen and produced in a barn; since then he has written more than 150 plays, including "Uptown, West."

OSBORNE, Hubert. Born Kingston, Canada, Educated

Royal Military College of Canada, Queen's University and Harvard. Inclinations always toward the stage—at the age of seven he told his family that he was going to be either a bishop or an actor, —and he did try to act. First play, "The Schooling of Sophie"; other plays "Rita Coventry," "The Blue Bandana," "The Puppet Master," "The Song of Solomon." A play called "April" was his first production; his first success was "Shore Leave," which David Belasco produced, although he says he liked the musical version, "Hit the Deck," much better.

OURSLER, Fulton. Born Baltimore, 1893. After two years in law and seven years on the staff of the Baltimore American as reporter, music and dramatic critic came to New York to edit the Music Trades, a weekly journal. Has written novels, among them "Behold This Dreamer," "Sandalwood," "Step Child of the Moon" and "Poor Little Fool." His first play was "The Spider," in which he collaborated with Lowell Brentano. His initial production was "Sandalwood," a dramatization of his novel by Owen Davis. Later plays are "Behold This Dreamer," "All the King's Horses," "Nowadays."

PAGE, Mann. Born Denver, Col., 1889. Educated Alexandria public schools and Episcopal High School, Alexandria, Va. Studied playwriting and went to business college in New York and then returned to Denver to study law and produce plays. First play, "The American Boy," produced at Elitch's Gardens, Denver, when he was thirteen; other plays, "Lights Out" and "The Backslapper" (both written with Paul Dickey), "Mama Loves

Papa," (written in collaboration with John McGowan), and "Hush Money" (with Alfred E. Jackson).

PERLMAN, William Jacob. Born, 1886, Prenn, Lithuania. Came to New York at the age of five and a half; attended public schools, College of the City of New York, and the School of Mines, Columbia University. Has been engineer, newspaper reporter, advertising salesman, lecturer, underwear salesman, theatre owner, producer and, by his own admission, "bankrupt." His first play was written in 1912 but never saw production. Between then and 1926 wrote eight plays on two of which options were sold but neither of which was produced. His first play to be produced was "My Country"; his second was "The Bottom of the Cup," a collaboration with John Tucker Battle.

RAPHAELSON, Samson. Born New York, 1897. Attended high school in Chicago and the University of Illionis. Did newspaper and advertising work in New York and Chicago and wrote many short stories and essays for the magazines. His first play was "The Jazz Singer," a definite success. Other plays are "Young Love" and "Harlem."

REED, Luther. Born Berlin, Wisconsin, 1888, from which he escaped with parental aid at the age of two. Educated in the public schools of Beloit, Wis. and New York, and at Columbia University. Was a reporter on the New York Herald, 1910–16. Wrote screen plays and is now directing for Paramount-Famous-Lasky. "Dear Me" was his first stage work; to his astonishment it was something of a

success. Also wrote "The Scarlet Man" with Willaim LeBaron.

ROBERTSON, Willard. Born Runnels, Texas, 1886, and named for Francis Willard, the temperance worker. Was educated in the public schools of Texas and Washington, D. C. and was honor man at National University Law School in Washington. Turned to acting and still pays his Equity dues. First play was "Big Game"; has also written "The Sea Woman," "Black Velvet" and half a dozen other "masterpieces which were killed by actors west of Altoona."

ROYLE, Edwin Milton. Born Lexington, Mo., 1862. Crossed the plains in a coach, stopping first in Colorado and moving on later to Utah where his father, a lawyer, tried the Emma mine case. Attended a Presbyterian school, the Salt Lake Collegiate Institute: went later to Princeton, thence to the Edinburgh University and finally to Columbia law school, where Charles Evans Hughes was his quiz master. Stage interest developed in school: staged "David Garrick" at Princeton and played the lead: staged "King o' Scots," a dramatization of "The Fortunes of Nigel," at Edinburgh. First New York production comedy called "Friends," playing lead when E. J. Henley was taken ill: continued in the part for years. Later wrote "Capt. Impudence," "The Squaw Man," "The Struggle Everlasting," "These Are My People" and many other plays and sketches. His last production was "Her Way Out."

SAMUELS, Maurice V. Born San Francisco, 1874, and although he practically threw away his heritage by living in New York for twenty years he is now a

native son again. He lives in Hollywood. Educated in the San Francisco schools and at the University of California. Was a lawyer for seven years, an "oil man" for two and a playwright thereafter. His first play was "The Maid of Orleans"; others produced are "The Wanderer," "The Flame of Love" and "The Conflict." "A Pageant of the Strong" and "The Florentines" have been published, but not staged.

SCARBOROUGH, George Moore. Born Mt. Carmel, Tex., 1875. Studied at Baylor University and graduated from the University of Texas with an LL.B. in 1897. In Texas he was a lawyer. He wanted to write plays so he came to New York and got a job as a reporter on the American. Later worked with the U. S. Department of Justice. His first play was "The Lure," one of the first of the red-light drama series. "At Bay" and "What Is Love?" followed. "The Heart of Wetona," which David Belasco staged for Lenore Ulric, was a success and "The Son Daughter," both revised by Mr. Belasco, followed two seasons later. His latest plays have been "The Heaventappers" (with Anna Westbay) and "From Hell Came a Lady," produced in Los Angeles.

SCHOENBERG, Edgar M. Born Baltimore, 1898, and educated in high school and business college. Admits that the Warburton Stock Company of Yonkers was his first influence toward the theatre, which is the first time Yonkers has ever been blamed for that. His first production was "The Mystery Ship"; other

plays are "People Don't Do Such Things" a collaboration, and "The Jungle."

SEARS, Zelda. Born Brockway, Mich., 1873. Public schools and thence to learn about life as a cashgirl. Tried to run away to join a circus but compromised with the family and took to the stage. Played comedy rôles in many of the Clyde Fitch successes. Wrote "Lady Billy" for Mitzi and the experience was financially so successful continued as a playwright. Did "The Clinging Vine" for Peggy Wood, "Cornered" for Madge Kennedy in collaboration with Dodson Mitchell: "Lollipop" for Ada May Weeks, "The Magic Ring" for Mitzi Hajos, "Undertow" and "The Scarlet Woman."

SHORT, Marion. Born in Illinois, some forty years ago. Studied for the stage in New York and became a dramatic reader. Wrote many amateur plays for Samuel French, including "Miss Somebody Else" and "The Touchdown." First New York production was "A Grand Army Man," written in collaboration with Pauline Phelps, with whom she also wrote "Shavings," "Sweet Clover," "Cosy Corners" and "The Girl From Out Yonder," the last three of which have been produced only on the road.

STANLEY, Martha. Born Cape Cod, Mass., 1879. Educated in high schools, Summer training schools and at a Boston school of Journalism. Was employed as feature writer on Boston papers for three years. First play written alone was "My Son"; also wrote in collaboration with Adelaide Matthews "Nightie Night," "Scrambled Wives," "The Teaser,"

"Puppy Love," and "The Wasp's Nest," of which "Nightie Night" was the biggest success.

STARLING, Lynn. Born Hopkinsville, Ky., about 1893. Educated in public schools and at Centre College. Became a teacher at Lawrenceville School for Boys, but kept one eye on the stage for which he had cherished ambitions since boyhood. Then became an actor, and remained so for ten years. First play and most successful production was "Meet the Wife"; also is author of "In His Arms" and "Weak Sisters."

STEPHENS, Nan Bagby. Born Atlanta, Ga., 1892. Specialized in music and, after attending local schools, went to Vienna where she studied piano, counterpoint and composition for two years. The encouragement given her as a girl by Joel Chandler Harris turned her to writing. First play was "The Cure-all," after which came "Roseanne," "John Barleycorn," "Black Sheep," "Tares," "Unto Caesar" and "Six Little Plays of Old New Orleans." "Roseanne," a negro play, was her first production. It is now being turned into an opera.

STILLMAN, Henry. Born in Brooklyn about forty years ago. Educated in the public schools and came into the theatre through work with David Belasco. His first play was "Prince Vagabond," which may someday emerge as a Friml operetta; others were "Nightshade," "Nocturne" (from Swinnerton's novel) and "Lally."

SWAN, Mark Elbert. Born Rockport, Ind. about 1875. At the age of sixteen was a barnstorming "ten,

twent' thirt' " actor. Began to write at the age of 13; first New York production was "Brown's In Town" in 1898. Among his other plays are "Her Own Money," "The Gentleman from No. 19," "All Aboard," "Somebody's Luggage," "A Regular Fellow," "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath," (with C. W. Bell), "She Walked in her Sleep," "Judy Drops In" and "Howdy, King."

TOLER, Sidney. Born Warrensburg, Mo., 1874, but was taken by his parents to Wichita, Kan., at an early stage. Educated in public schools and the University of Kansas. For several years he was the crack amateur comedian of Wichita, appearing in plays written by his mother whose purpose in this work was to help build the Christian Church. Finally went on the stage to "avoid work." First play was "The Belle of Richmond," produced in many repertory companies as an opening bill. Other plays are "The Exile," "Playthings," "The Man They Left Behind," "The Dancing Master," "Miss Efficiency" and "Golden Days" (written with Marion Short).

TOTHEROH, Dan. Born Oakland, Cal., 1898. Public and high school and later taught acting at the University of California. Became an actor at a comparatively tender age, played his own sketch, "Her Kid Brother," for several seasons. Has written a dozen plays, including "Wild Birds," "In the Darkness," "The Widdy's Mite," "The Stolen Prince" etc. "Wild Birds" was produced in California in 1922 and barred by the censor in San Francisco. Produced in New York in 1925 and ran several weeks, win-

ning the author many compliments but not much in royalties.

UNGER, Gladys. Born San Francisco, Cal. Influenced by her maternal guardian to leave at the age of 2. Travelled abroad and settled in London, England. Went to school in London and rebelled at the age of 10 because they would not let her read Maeterlinck. Dramatized "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" when she was 11, and retitled it "The Seven Ages of Woman." Having acquired a stepfather who was an artist, went to Paris to study art at Julian's, and met Doris Keane in the convent where both were living. Later told Doris about a French comedy, "L'Amour Veille," which, at the suggestion of Charles Frohman, she adapted for the English stage. Billie Burke later played it under the title of "Love Watches." Other adaptations followed, including "Inconstant George" and "The Marionettes." Abandoning adaptations she wrote original plays, including "Henry of Lancaster," which Ellen Terry played, and later "The Son and Heir." A year later she was doing musical comedy books, "The Nightbirds," "Marriage Market" and "Betty." In 1916 she wrote a war play, with Neil Lyons, called "London Pride," which was a success. After the war she returned to America and did a series of adaptations for Lee Schubert, including "The Goldfish" for Marjorie Rambeau, "The Business Widow" for Leo Ditrichstein, "The Love Habit," "The Werewolf," "Stolen Fruit," "The Monkey Talks," "Lovely Lady" and "The Madcap." "Starlight," written for Doris Keane, was well

liked in the west but not in the east. "Two Girls Wanted" played for forty-two weeks. And then Miss Unger went to Hollywood. "I have committed various indiscretions," writes Miss Unger. "I once married a Persian poet and helped him to write a play on Lord Byron, and I have done some sensible things, like getting a divorce and buying real estate in Hollywood. But first, foremost and all time I am a woman of the theatre without other hobbies or interests. All I want now is to write bigger and better plays."

WEBB, Kenneth. Born New York, 1892. Educated Collegiate School and Columbia University. Writing and staging Columbia varsity shows gave him an idea that he'd like to follow the business permanently. Wrote vaudeville sketches, musical comedy lyrics, and motion picture scripts; also served as a director in pictures. His first full length play and production was "One of the Family."

WEIMAN, Rita. Born Philadelphia a matter of years ago. Attended the Friends' Central School in Philadelphia and the Art Students' League in New York, with a study period in Europe to follow. Did newspaper work in New York, and gave that up to write for the magazines. Wanted to be an actress, took it out in writing. First play a short one, "The Watchdog," for Mary Nash. Later collaborated with Alice Pollock and produced "The Co-respondent." Afterward wrote "The Acquittal" and "Moon Magic."

WESTERVELT, George Conrad. Born Corpus Christi, Texas, 1880. Graduated United States Naval Academy, 1901, and did post-graduate work at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from which he received Master of Science Degree in 1907. Wrote plays while at both places. His first to be produced was "Not Too Fast," others are "Romancing 'Round" and "Mongolia."

WILLARD, John. Born San Francisco, 1886. Was taken to Paris at the age of eight, then Italy and later to Switzerland. Went to school in Paris and later to the University of California. Was an aviator during the war. After having been thrown out of college by the San Francisco earthquake, he went into newspaper work and then on the stage. After playing in such successes as "Within the Law" and "Very Good, Eddie," he decided that the way to make the big money was to write plays. His first was "Eunice," a Greek tragedy in blank verse; others were "The Blue Flame" (his first production), "The Green Beetle," "The Red Hate," "The Cat and the Canary," "Sisters," "Fog," "Adventure." "The Cat and the Canary," a mystery play, has been his biggest success.

WINSLOW, Herbert Hall. Born in Keokuk, Iowa, at a date which he is afraid to make public in this day when, he says, only the young playwright is in vogue. Educated at Keokuk High School, and refused chance to go to college to work on local newspaper. Wrote his first play, a lurid melodrama, for a travelling repertory company and received a royalty of five dollars a performance. His first six plays were acted all over the country, but never came to Broadway. Has had fifty-six plays produced, eighteen of them in New York, has written two hundred vaudeville

sketches and a dozen motion pictures. One of the most recent plays was "What's Your Wife Doing?," from which the musical comedy "Mercenary Mary" was made.

YOUNG, Howard Irving. Born Jersey City, 1893. Educated New York University and at the Sorbonne. Became a scenario writer and production manager for the motion pictures; eventually escaped from Hollywood to become film critic for Theatre Magazine, book reviewer for the Nation and New York Herald-Tribune and playwright. First play was "March On!," presented on the road in 1925. It got as close to Broadway as Brooklyn. Other plays are "Not Herbert," "Camera" and "The Star Gazer."

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